# JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

HELENE WEYL

## I

A CIRCLE of men in a room high above one of the chief arteries of Madrid where the shrill life of the hot, dry city roars on and on, relentlessly, until the small hours of the night. Looming through the blue cigarette smoke, a group of haggard masklike faces—the masklike faces of an old race that by long tradition has learnt to hide its feelings—a group of Spanish faces like those in El Greco's great painting "The Burial of the Count Orgaz."

One of them, with the lean olive features of the Castilian peasants and an Andalusian *torero's* haughty grace, has such an intense way of listening that, even silent, he seems to determine the level of the conversation. When something rouses his protest, his speech is like a cataract after the bursting of a dam and does not cease for hours. It flows on and on: sometimes with hot defiant words, above which heavy brows and flashing eyes threaten like a thunderstorm; sometimes in long poised sentences explaining with unyielding patience a difficult philosophic point; again, rushing out from behind the theories in a daring personal remark, like a faun from the thicket. And with it always the accompaniment of the easy expressive gestures of the Latin races, the swift, strong, virile movements of perfectly shaped hands.

We are in the quarters of the *Revista de Occidente*, and the man is Ortega y Gasset—a philosopher by profession and vocation, but a philosopher of a peculiar sort. The collaborators of the *Revista* come together every night after sunset, and this Round Table has the character of the famous Spanish *tertulia*. A *tertulia* is a lifelong alliance between a group of men who meet daily at the

same table in the same café, discuss all the vicissitudes of their lives, and are prepared to help each other as true friends. For a good Spaniard his *tertulia* is the place where he lives his real life, even more than in his own family. The meetings in the quarters of the *Revista* on Pi y Margall street are the *tertulia* of the Spanish intellectuals; for in Spain the layer of intellectuals is still so thin that they all know each other. When a new star rises in the provinces it is rarely more than a year before he makes his appearance in Madrid.

The *Revista* is the mouthpiece of the best Spanish writers, novelists and poets, Marichalar, Vela, Morente, Jarnés, Marañón, Espina, Lorca, Alberti. It carries, besides, skilfully selected articles translated from all the European languages. In Spain it has no equal. Ortega, its editor and founder, also played an important rôle in the foundation of the publishing house Espasa-Calpe, and the newspaper *El Sol*. Espasa-Calpe is one of the most important publishing houses in the world, its books finding a market not only in Spain but in all the Spanish-speaking countries of South and Central America. It enables Ortega to bring before the Spanish public the translations, chiefly of German scientific books, made at his instigation by a staff of young men some of whom he has gathered round him and some of whom he has himself trained. The newspaper *El Sol* was founded to serve as an instrument in the political struggle of an advance guard of intellectuals for the creation of a modern democracy on the Celtiberic peninsula.

This struggle, which had been going on in the background of the political scene for many years, finally came into the limelight and entered its most active and fruitful stage after the fall of the dictator Primo de Rivera. It was at that time, in the beginning of 1931,

that Manuel Azaña, a middle-aged civil servant of some literary pretensions, was elected as president of the Ateneo, Madrid's famous literary club, and that Ortega y Gasset founded the League for the Service of the Republic (*La agrupación al servicio de la república*) together with the famous doctor Gregorio Marañón and Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Spain's greatest contemporary novelist and her first ambassador to England after the establishment of the Republic. The *Agrupación*, properly speaking, was not a political party. Its members were not brought together by a common economic interest, or a definite political creed, but only by the sincere wish to propagate what seemed, according to their objective and impartial points of view, to be the best for the common welfare. It was an alliance of intellectuals.

As a representative of this party Ortega became a member of the Constituent Cortes of the Republic which met in July, 1931. It is his opinion, on which he has acted, that the men of science should help in building the foundation of the social edifice by laying down the principal ideas on which it is to rise, but that they must abstain from interfering with concrete political affairs. When, in the autumn of 1932, the republican constitution of Spain and (as a part of it) the constitution of Catalonia were promulgated, Ortega, more prudent than Plato once had been, held that the collaboration of the intellectuals had come to an end. He dissolved the party, resigned his seat in the Cortes, and withdrew to his books.

## II

Those two years of Left rule, from April, 1931, to the beginning of 1933, were a period of high hopes. Spain's three main political problems—the relation of the state to religion and the religious orders, the separatist move-

ments in the provinces, particularly in Catalonia, and the necessity of an agricultural reform in the south—were dealt with, if not in an altogether felicitous, at least in an able and courageous way. But the Republican government, exposed to attacks from both sides, the extreme Left and the extreme Right, had to take severe measures of defence which smacked of tyranny and caused growing unpopularity with the people and bitter disappointment in its own ranks. "No era eso" (it was not this we wanted) was a dictum of Ortega himself, much quoted among the Republicans in those days. The municipal elections of April, 1933, made it clear that the time of Azaña's socialistic régime was over. He stayed in office until, with the Law of Confessions and Congregations and with the creation of the Tribunal of Constitutional Guarantees, all laws complementary to the Constitution had passed the Cortes. Immediately after, the Constituent Cortes were dissolved.

The elections for the first ordinary parliament, held in November, 1933, brought about a fatal reaction towards conservatism and with it a period of continually changing governments and of unrest throughout the country, which was not far from civil war. The fruits of the Republic's first two years were in great danger of being completely lost. Then all parties of the Left, including Anarchists, Syndicalists, and Communists, combined under the leadership of Azaña, forming the so-called Popular Front which won the general elections of February, 1936. The next months show a feverish parliamentary activity, the government working hard to give effect once more to the Agrarian Law and the Law of Confessions and Congregations; but these endeavours give a weird impression of unreality against the background of burning churches and newspaper offices, of strikes, riots, and political assassina-

tions, which were the prelude to the outbreak of the revolution of July, 1936. What followed—that terrible series of events which the civilized world has watched with horror—is still too much contemporary history to be interpreted correctly at the present moment.

So much is clear that behind the mask of a military revolt of the well-known *pronunciamiento* type the Fascist powers of Europe started a war against Spanish democracy and the Spanish Republic. If they win, they will have to apply every means of terror to establish a second dictatorship against the double opposition of the country, which most likely will turn furiously on the foreign invaders, and against the reactionary forces of the Church, the Army, and the Monarchy. On the other hand, however, it is difficult to decide how many of the soaring ideals of the Republic of 1931 are still left in the Valencia government. One cannot expect much serenity and tolerance and liberalism after a revolution like this. Should the government win there is great danger that the most radical elements in the Leftist block will get the upper hand, and the result will be chaos. From whatever side one looks at it, the present situation of Spain appears utterly hopeless.

The sympathies of the majority of the intellectuals are not with the rebels. There could not have been much doubt as to Ortega's position in the tragedy of his country after the account he gave of his political credo in the book which made him famous on this continent, *The Revolt of the Masses*, and in an interesting earlier pamphlet, *España Invertebrada*.

## III

Invertebrate, Ortega calls his country, not for the reasons usually given for its desolate state—not because

of the corruption of its political life, the religious fanaticism, the lack of education—but for two more deeply rooted evils. The first is the process of disintegration which since about 1600 has slowly destroyed the Spanish Empire. One after another the colonies have been lost—Cuba and the Philippines, the last oversea territories, becoming American in 1898. But the process went on, working its way from the periphery to the centre. The so-called separatism, or regionalism, is only another aspect of it; and this is not restricted to Catalonia and the Basque Provinces, where it is the most obvious. It exists also in Valencia, Galicia, Andalusia, the Balearic Islands. It was Castile which in the remote past had forged the Spanish nation by giving the motive and the cue for a life in common. Ortega sees a nation not as a stable building erected on the basis of common blood, race, or language, but as a dynamic organization in which, through a process of incorporation, a tribe, of outstanding moral and vital qualities, conquers and organizes its neighbours by imposing on them a suggestive programme of collaboration. When the strength of the central power declines, as did that of Castile after the reign of Philip II, the conquered groups will tend to break away again. The spontaneous nationalistic impulses that have sprung up in the Spanish provinces should, therefore, not be suppressed by violence as a subversive movement stirred up by the ambition of local politicians; they must be taken into account as an authentic historic development. The problem of federalism has been much discussed among the Spanish Republicans ever since the dethronement of Isabel II in 1868. When Ortega advocates a greater decentralization of government he does not mean to touch the sanctity of established sovereignty

in the central power. What he wants is the creation of a number of small political and cultural nuclei.

Spain is still to-day an almost rural country where the few big cities—Madrid, Seville, Barcelona, Bilboa—produce the effect of skyscrapers in a wheat crop. The traveller no sooner leaves behind the chaotic traffic of Madrid than he sees, in the heroic emptiness of the Castilian Meseta, accompanied by their goats and dogs, the same shepherds at whose fires Don Quixote and Sancho rested. But Spain's politics have always been made by and for Madrid, while the provinces, hermetically shut off from all modern influences, led a medieval life. The monarchy had a certain interest in keeping the provinces in this inactivity, for if the provinces had voted according to their true opinion they would never have voted for the monarchy. The best proof of this is the fact that the Republic of 1931 was created not by a revolution, but by the simple means of municipal elections. The provinces being thus the natural support of the Republic, it was clearly a vital matter for the Republic to arrange a better organization of local life in municipalities and provinces. A greater decentralization of government does not only secure the passage of measures better adapted to the needs of the individual administrative sections, it also facilitates the political education of the voters. When a voter has to come to a decision about matters which touch him personally, he will naturally take a less spasmodic and more thoughtful interest in politics.

The weakening of Castile's gravitational attraction and the constant parallel growth of centrifugal forces in the provinces find their counterpart in another, more serious evil, which has hampered the whole of Spanish life, private and public. This second evil is the general

lack of select minorities in all fields of human activity, and, correlative with it, an unwillingness on the part of the average man to acknowledge any excellence whatsoever.

*España Invertebrada* was published in 1920. A few years later Ortega recognized that what he had thought a fatal ethnic peculiarity of his country was in reality a general European, if not a world-wide, phenomenon. He treated the problem again, in a more general way, in his book *The Revolt of the Masses.**

The authentic rôle of the masses in the structure of society is to be ruled by select minorities. This is true not only for political but also for social, intellectual, and religious life. Man has to acknowledge something higher than himself. If he is able to find it for himself, he belongs to the *élite;* if not, he must receive it from his betters. The democratic principle gives every man the freedom of choosing which of the existing minorities he wants to entrust with the public affairs. Ortega calls it the most generous of all political forms.

The masses of to-day have been taught in public schools how to use instruments and institutions—the result of technical and industrial development in the nineteenth century— which secure for them a standard of life unequalled in history. But they have not been taught what moral and intellectual efforts were necessary

**The Revolt of the Masses*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1934.

Other translations into English are: *The Modern Theme*, and *Invertebrate Spain* (both published by Norton); *The Dehumanization of Art*, Princeton (private distribution only). *Cf.* also "History as a System" in *Philosophy and History: Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer*, Oxford, 1936.

French translations: *Essais Espagnols*, Paris, Éditions du Cavalier.

German translations: *Die Aufgabe unserer Zeit; Der Aufstand der Massen; Ueber die Liebe; Buch des Betrachters* (Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt).

For the original text the best source is: *Obras de José Ortega y Gasset*, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1932.

to invent and establish all this. Therefore they take everything for granted and see no reason why they should acknowledge and obey any authority except their own. They unscrupulously proclaim the right of vulgarity. They despise all norms, religious, ethical, logical, aesthetic, which are necessary to control human actions. They do not want to convince; they do not want to be right, nor even to be consistent. They proceed by means of violence and terror, by what Sorel called *l'action directe*. That means that the reign of the masses inevitably brings about a new barbarism.

Now, Ortega does not lament over the loss of the beauty and harmony, the feeling of perfection and completeness, which made the lives of our parents so happy and dignified, while giving them at the same time a touch of melancholy boredom. On the contrary, he welcomes the new restlessness, the lure of the re-opened horizon; life seems to him best when it is in danger. But the great problem of our age is to decide who is going to rule in the world.

## IV

Along with his activities of a more political character Ortega has been busy as a university professor in lectures and seminars. He has held the chair of Metaphysics at the University of Madrid for twenty-five years—with one short interruption when he resigned because he was unwilling to serve the dictator Primo de Rivera. In twenty-five years of arduous endeavour he has succeeded, if not in raising the level of the average student to the general European standard, at least in educating a small group of young philosophers who are able to do serious scholarly work.

When Ortega began to teach and to write, Spain had

just awakened from a long apathy. She had, as it were, over-slept two centuries of European civilization. Behind the Pyrenees, Reformation and Counter-Reformation had been of minor importance; the ideas of the age of enlightenment had found but a feeble echo, and the industrial and technical development of the nineteenth century, which brought about such radical changes in the social and mental structure of Europe, had scarcely any influence. About 1900, therefore, the first thing to attempt was the re-establishment of contact with Europe. Such was the endeavour of a group who called themselves the "generation of '98," the late Valle-Inclán, Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno, Maeztu.

But if we try to trace back through the nineteenth century the main root of the nation's spiritual recovery, we come to the decisive, though inconspicuous, moment when a country-lad from Estremadura set forth to Germany to continue his studies in law and philosophy. His name was Sanz del Río, and he was the first Spaniard since the days of Philip II to go abroad purely for purposes of study. The booty this scientific conquistador brought back from his expedition was rather surprising. When after two years at Heidelberg, and nine of monkish seclusion at Illescas, he thought himself worthy to hold a professorship in the History of Philosophy at the University of Madrid, the gospel he wanted to propagate was—the philosophy of Krause. Now Krause, who belonged to the school of German Romantic philosophy, led during his lifetime an altogether miserable and obscure existence, and after his death went to the limbo of complete oblivion. There is a hint of comedy in the spectacle of his philosophy, under the name of Krausismo, reviving and giving the impulse for nearly all progress in Spain during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Pi y Margall, Salmerón, Castelar, the three presidents of the ill-starred First Republic (1873-4) were among Sanz del Río's disciples, and so was Giner de los Ríos, the great Praeceptor Hispaniae, who, like Ortega, combined the philosophical spirit with a passion for education.

In 1876, after the restoration of the Bourbons, Giner de los Ríos had convinced himself that it was hopeless to expect any help from the state and therefore gathered a little band of friends with whom he founded the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, a day-school for two hundred boys. The importance of the *Institución* can hardly be overemphasized. It has educated a generation of scientists and statesmen, teachers, officials, lawyers, and doctors, who believe in free inquiry and tolerance, emancipated from the tyranny of the priests, otherwise omnipotent in Spain until 1931. And whatever has been done for modern education and research during the last decades, goes back to Giner's *Institución Libre*. The *Junta para ampliación de los estudios*, the *Centro histórico*, the two *Residencias*, the *Institución escuela*, would have been impossible without the Institution of Free Instruction.

And so with the work of Ortega himself. He consummates what Sanz del Río and Giner de los Ríos began. There is something awkward and even grotesque about those great personalities; a certain eccentricity which almost inevitably adheres to first attempts—I have instanced only that absurd encounter between Spain and Krause, Krause in an empty desert without any historical background to give him the right setting. But when Ortega sets out for his life-work, he finds the road broken and can proceed in a less breathless and haphazard way, acquiring a general and systematic insight into the structure of that whole continent of contemporary

civilization which had been re-opened for Spain by the efforts of the previous generation. So it was Ortega after all to whom it was left to acquaint his countrymen with the true spirit of German culture.

And who better fitted for the task? Given his great natural endowments, and his Spanish blood, it was the close contact with German scientific endeavour which formed that superior mind. Ortega studied in Leipzig and Berlin, where he fought his first desperate battles with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, so inaccessible to a Latin mind. In 1908 he went to Marburg, returning for another year in 1911. Marburg was at that time a strong centre of philosophy, thanks to Natorp and Cohen, the two great masters of the neo-Kantian school. Cohen, though already at the threshold of old age, was still a powerful mind. It may be that from the overwhelming cataract of his eloquence his disciples received no clear and detailed knowledge of his philosophical outlook, but they emerged with a keen sense of the insoluble dramatic conflict inherent in every great problem that has come down to us through the centuries.

Thus, at the decisive age of twenty-seven, when the creative power of a man begins to stir, determining the essential features of all his later work, Ortega lived in the lovely, old-fashioned German university-town among a group of young people for whom philosophizing was as indispensable as their daily bread. There were eager discussions about Parmenides and Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Fichte, at the breakfast tables of modest boarding houses, in the lecture rooms of the old university building, in the quaint beer-gardens by the river, and during those endless walks after the quiet town had gone to sleep and nothing stirred but the soft winds of fragrant summer nights.

Those years at Marburg made Ortega a German philosopher. A German scholar visiting him in his house in Madrid—a house invaded from basement to attic by a library which has outgrown all shelves—would find that the Spaniard understood every slightest allusion, had read all the books and felt himself as much at home in German culture as in his own dwelling.

## V

But what a difference! While we may be sure that the German professor has preserved the yield of his labours in some more or less grave and heavy books, Ortega has spent it in the small change of countless newspaper articles and magazine essays. The greater part of his books—above all the eight volumes which bear the title *El Espectador* (the Spectator)—are collections of newspaper articles. Like Socrates, Ortega has seized every opportunity to speak to the youths of Madrid, and to everyone who had ears to hear, telling them about his intellectual experiences and discoveries. The variety of his subjects is amazing: economics, archaeology, music, literature, history, psychology, history of art, physics, mathematics even—nothing seems to be beyond the ken of this indefatigable reader and thinker.

In his delightful pages we do not find philosophical ideas in abstract nakedness; we find them broken up into the multi-coloured spectrum of political, aesthetic, social, erotic, historical problems. Ortega never seems to expound and discuss mere theories, but touches all that is closest to each man, awakening thus an acute sense of life's difficulties and problems and a ready desire for a keen fight to overcome them. His books are dialogues with the reader, written in a highly personal style that sometimes has the quality of a caress and sometimes of a

sharp reprimand. They are like a voice speaking, now with the crystalline purity of penetrating precision, now kind and gentle like a friend and master, or again with the happy swiftness and almost coquettish grace of the brilliant *causeur*.

Someone, who knows him well, once called Ortega "a Don Juan of the spirit." For him a problem that has aroused his desire to know is like a woman with whom one has fallen in love, and who, with agile grace and subtle shrewdness, baffles all efforts to capture her. He strives to conquer truth in a rapture of curiosity, and when she surrenders, revealing her inmost secrets, there is a triumphant joy in the victory not unlike the bliss of satisfied passion. Ortega once began an essay about love under the title "Landscape with a Roe in the Background." He did not finish it. While he wrote, the roe in the background, which at the hunter's approach breaks away in swift flight, luring men and dogs on in gallant pursuit into the green golden depth of the forest—the roe with the spell of the unknown in her wide dark eyes, had turned for him into the symbol of truth.

So, for Ortega thinking is not a frigid, isolated operation of the intellect. It is part of the one continuous stream of life, not less ardent and exciting, not less glowing with joy and pain, than all authentic human activities. He once said that he never felt it his vocation to advance "eternal"—that is timeless and spaceless—philosophical theories for mankind. It is not the philosopher's main task, he believes, to construct a logically consistent system, but to discover, through his clearer insight into the structure of the universe and the human soul, new solutions for the urgent conflicts and problems of our actual life. Here we come to the deepest root of Ortega's personality, from which has sprung his thinking

as well as his acting: the inborn conviction that *human life* is above all. It is the *ultima res* of philosophy and the forum before which everything, even philosophy itself, has to be justified. Ortega has not given account of his philosophical standpoint in the usual systematic way; he has not written a metaphysic because—his metaphysic forbade it.

While Ortega received most of his philosophical training in the neo-Kantian school of Marburg he was also strongly impressed by the phenomenology of Husserl, who, if not the greatest, is doubtless the most powerful of contemporary philosophers. This means that he grew up in the idealist tradition.

Philosophy invariably begins with the search for the ultimate dependable reality, on which to found all other realities. Realism finds this fundamental entity in the existence of the external world, while idealism withdraws to the existence of consciousness as the rock that resists all assaults of doubt, be it consciousness in the form of the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum*, Kant's "pure ego," Fichte's "light that enlightens itself," or Husserl's "absolute consciousness." To this Ortega objects that the pure ego, which claims to be the positive, fundamental, and primary reality, is neither fundamental nor real. It is not real in the simple sense of "being there," being given to me; for it is a late and complex construction of the sophisticated philosopher. And it is not primary, for what is truly and primarily "there" and given to me is not a pure ego but myself living in an environment of things, external and internal. It is true that the world does not exist without my perceiving it; but it is true, as well, that I do not exist without the world happening to me. The ultimate reliable reality is "the eternal dialogue between a man and his circumstances."

The idea that philosophy ought to construct a new reality visible only to the eyes of the philosophic guild, is an error of long standing. Actually the characteristic of reality consists precisely in its calmly preceding all efforts of thinking. The great discovery of thinking is its recognition of itself as something secondary, an outcome of the pre-existing reality.

This reality is the co-existence of man and the world, or, more exactly, their mutual happening to one another. The category of the "absolute happening" is the only one by which, from the standpoint of the traditional ontology, we can describe this queer reality which is called "my life." In all previous metaphysics the idea of existence involved that of being. Substance, which in materialism is the ultimate reality, is something static, and so are the various concepts of consciousness in the idealist theories. But the philosophy of life is based on an eternal flowing process, the unfolding and progressing of life in time. It is clear that in this dynamic conception time must play a special part. The last traces of rigidity which adhere to the concept of existence because of its birth from substantial matter, are here dissolved completely. Existence is no longer equivalent to being; it is a continuous becoming.

My life does not exist in the same way that a stone exists. It is not "there" once and for all. I find myself living in and with the world, it is true, but I have to *make* my life myself. In every single moment I have to decide anew what I am going to do, and that means what I am going to be, in the next. This freedom to choose entails a grave responsibility. For among those things a man might do, there is always one he has to do if he wants to be authentically and sincerely himself. He is free to escape his destiny to which an inner voice calls him, but

only at the price of falsifying himself and deserting his own life. He is free to neglect his vocation, but he is not free to abolish it.

Such an interpretation of human life involves a general attitude of alertness and unfaltering earnestness. A man who knows that every moment of his life is laden with the responsibility of free decision cannot trifle, nor indulge either in snobbery or in sloth and sweet leisure.

That is why Ortega does not admire the artists. He thinks, like Nietzsche, that they lie too much. They do not submit to the unrelenting categories of real and unreal, true and false. Through the witchcraft of imagination they strive to hide from us the ghastly fact that we have but one life and that we have lost it for time and eternity when we shun its intrinsic imperative by following the ways of least resistance.

Science itself does not live up to the unyielding norm of Ortega as long as, confined to its own workshop, it is concerned with nothing but the intricate play of combining concepts in a logically consistent way. He consequently rejects all definitions of reason according to which it consists in special operations of the intellect. Reason, he asserts, is each intellectual act that brings us in contact with some kind of transcendental objective reality. Reason is no intellectual puzzle; it is the revelation of something beyond.

Science or, generally speaking, culture is not self-contained nor self-sufficing. It is a tool of life, created by men in order to find their way and hold their own in the hostile world. All scientific discoveries and inventions are the reactions of man's creative imagination upon the difficulties opposed to him by circumstances. Seen at this angle of vision, the pursuit of truth is no entertaining luxury, indulged in by a few well-bred and well-clad

gentlemen of mild aloofness; it is a part, and not one of the least important parts, of the dramatic struggle of man to adapt the world to his needs and desires, or to adapt himself to its structure.

When in the hierarchy of human activities the cultural endeavours have thus been assigned their due place, one feels as though they had been brought into a moderate climate where they can thrive, while before they had been exalted to a region of ice or fire, existing in the wintry heights of abstraction aloof from life, or being worshipped like sacred idols.

We have seen the terrible collapse of this religion of culture. Ortega's philosophy of life, which looks at this field of human activities without the ecstasy of the worshipper or the *ressentiment* of the barbarian, shows a way to save culture which to-day is in grave danger.

When "my coexistence with the world" is made the fundamental concept of metaphysics, this involves a new hierarchy among the different sciences. Since the seventeenth century the natural sciences have been regarded as the most important part of science in its entirety. Through their investigations men expected to attain true knowledge of the universe. The main task of philosophy was the justification of their methods, and their methods—the most ingenious combination of the creative power of mathematical construction with sober control through experience—became the model and the measuring-rod for scientific research in general. From the time of Descartes and Malebranche it has been the ambition of natural science to understand not only the material universe but life, and especially human life, as well. Man had a body, therefore he was handed over to biology; he had a mind, so he was entrusted to psychology—both natural sciences. But to-day, after three centuries of various and sagacious

theories, we cannot but admit that the glorious achievements of physics in its own field stand in marked contrast to the pallid glimpses it has given us of the true nature of life.

From the basis of the "philosophy of life" we now understand why such failure was inevitable. The reality of man, what is truly human in a human being, is not his body nor his mind and soul, but his life—that which happens to him. Man as man belongs not to nature, but to history. It is meaningless to say of a stone that it happens to it to be heavy: it *is* heavy. But a man is not "there" as a being determined once and for all. He grows; he becomes; he makes himself. His essence is an uninterrupted action, and therefore cannot be defined but must be narrated.

My life is not an independent entity. Begin to analyse it, and it flows over and out in all directions into the great aggregate of the totality of individual fates: the history of mankind. The individual finds himself in a social and historical as well as in a physical world. His life stands on a mountain of accumulated lives, past and present. There is a new cosmos, a reality as objective as that of nature, though radically different from nature: the destiny of mankind as it is precipitated in history.

Ortega y Gasset is in his early fifties now. That is the age which Aristotle called the hour of ripening, when the insights of a life's experience come together from all sides, confirming and supporting each other. It is the time when all fields are golden, when the fruits are swelling with mellow sweetness and a man would like to have a thousand hands to bring the harvest in. Ortega feels that he has found the Archemedian point from which, not to lever, but to understand the world.

# CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC THEORY

H. R. MacCallum

THE scandalous confusion of contemporary aesthetic theory is not without its honourable side: it rises largely from the stubborn attempt to do justice to *all* the facts. A carpet, a joke, a triumphal arch, a procession, a gown, a garden, a psalm, an aeroplane, a fairy-tale, as well as a statue, painting, poem, or symphony, are proper objects for aesthetic reflection. And how could any theory be stretched to include them all without splitting, or, alternatively, becoming harmlessly inane?

Add that the vicissitudes of taste make any attempt to order this vast material precarious. There is only too attractive a variety of ways in which the historical material may be dealt with. Add, too, that there are various points of view: the aesthetic of a creative artist is likely to differ essentially from that of a critic, or a spectator, or a philosopher with a general theory of value.

Finally there is the confusion arising from recurrent infidelity to the principle of the autonomy of art, which has been the cornerstone of aesthetic theory since Kant with a firm hand laid its foundations in the eighteenth century. From admitting that ideas are essential to a poem, usefulness to a building, representation to a painting, *etc.*, it is but a step to denying the existence of any specific and unique type of value in art, and making it an appendix to morals, the handmaid of truth, the servant of practice, or even *meretrix ecclesiae*. Accordingly the step is taken.

It is thus easy to see how eclecticism, that is confused and incoherent thinking, is the rule in the subject. Hermann Nohl—to take an example of the avowed

eclecticism which we must prefer to the unconscious variety—admits four coequal first-principles of aesthetics: Expression, to cover arts like music which cannot be forced into the mould of representation; the Will to Reality for those like painting which are representational and so cannot be made to fit the formula of mere rhythmic pattern; Beauty, to cover those arts of pure design which do not contain any hint of the revelation of unseen presences; and finally Symbolic Significance for those like architecture, which do. The theory based on this interesting method of residues contains much that is valuable; yet it is very insecurely grounded. If the *essential* worth of art can consist in one place in the satisfaction of theoretical curiosity, in another in that of religious needs, and so on, there seems no good reason to exclude other claimants with titles no more and no less well-founded, such as pleasure, practical utility, eroticism, moral value, patriotic or social expediency, and so on.

It is not my purpose to reproduce—or aggravate—this chaos by attempting a complete catalogue of names and review of theories,* but rather to deal with the chief alternative types of theory, at the risk of some injustice, since few theories accurately conform to type. The clue to the maze will be the dialectic process whereby, if a theory is too wide and includes obviously non-aesthetic material, or too narrow (confined to a restricted group of arts), the opposite theory is called up by the outraged facts to do vengeance for them.

We may start with a low-grade theory, that which unhesitatingly discerns that aesthetic value is just pleasure. Fechner, the hard-headed parent of laboratory

*In a Bibliographical Note, appended to the article, the author supplies the titles of some of the principal works in which these theories are advanced or summarized. [EDITOR'S NOTE]

aesthetics, who defines it as a branch of alghedonics, the psychological study of pleasure and unpleasure, is here in agreement with the most dilettante aesthete of the Wilde period or our own. A list including Groos, Guyau, Basch, Allen, Bell, Santayana, and Marshall, would contain both hard-headed and soft-headed specimens. The well-worn arguments against hedonism which are as valid for aesthetics as they are for ethics or logic, need not be repeated. It is enough to note that the theory is too wide. Either pleasures are frankly admitted to be on a single level and to differ only quantitatively, and then with Guyau we shall have to include gastronomical, sexual, and indeed all other pleasures in our subject, or else recourse must be had to the old sophism of "higher" pleasures where a surreptitious appeal to standards other than pleasure is involved. H. R. Marshall, for instance, distinguishes aesthetic from other pleasures as being *relevant*, *i.e.*, projected into the object, not thought of as inhering in the subject, and as *common*, *i.e.*, capable of being shared. Clearly it is only by supposing something peculiar in the *objects* of aesthetic experience that such distinctions, which are not contained in pleasure as such, can be established.

There can, in fact, be no reason to regard pleasure and delight in aesthetic experience as anything more than they are when any other human value is realized, *viz.*, a concomitant or resultant of value, not its essence: a reflected glow, not the source of light.

In another way the theory is too narrow, since works of art with an ugly or tragic content do not please in any *prima facie* sense. Thus arise, dialectically, anti-dilettante theories (Tolstoy, Laurila) which assert that art is dead earnest, an affair of the utmost importance for humanity,

and which tend to the opposite extreme of identifying art with morality.

The play theory of Groos, von Stein, Menzer, and others is a disguised form of the pleasure theory. Play, it asserts, is the art of children, and art the play of adults. Bentham's remark, then, can be improved on. Not only is poetry no better than pushpin, it is pushpin. There is certainly a core of truth in the analogy between art and play, and Kant and Schiller who introduced the term in modern times meant to say that art is completely disinterested with respect to useful ends. But it is only an analogy, and taken seriously breaks down in respect of both its terms. For the child's play, pursued as if it were an end in itself, is largely a means to biological ends, the pre-exercise of functions that are to have serious importance. And, as Delacroix has acutely observed, adult art, which really is an end in itself, shows no trace of the indifference to material that characterizes play. In the realm of make-believe any object can stand for any other. The artist's passionate concern with every refractory knot or yielding grain of his material puts him in a different category from the player.

Even the sound element in this theory, its recognition that art and use lie along different dimensions of order and value, proceeds to arouse its dialectical antagonist in the "work" theory. Thus the "functionalism," professed by engineers or architects like le Corbusier, directly equates beauty with fitness to perform a given function, *i.e.*, with utility of the sort typified by the arrangement of parts in a machine. "A house," says le Corbusier, "is a machine for habitation." This theory is probably a by-product of contemporary practice rather than its explanation. New forms appear in house-furnishing, architecture, *etc.*, under pressure of a new mode of feeling;

since a certain stark simplicity characterizes these forms, the theory of unadorned usefulness seems plausible. But function is relative to the total complex of styles and manners in any period, and, as a concern of cabinet-maker or architect, may fairly be taken as a constant, so that some other principle is required to explain fundamental differences in style. How functional, for instance, would one of our low, deep, thick-cushioned chairs be in an age of courtly etiquette and hoop-skirts?

Further, being tied down to the building arts, functionalism is too narrow. It is true there are profound affinities between, say, contemporary music and architecture, such as austerity and the avoidance of adventitious ornament; but to call this functionalist music, and to explain that each part is strictly constructed with a view to its function in the whole is to be paid in words; it is to confuse the mathematical, formal sense of the word function with its biological meaning. And it should be clear that music as such—that is, exclusive of the National Anthem, the Red Flag, and the like—is and must be useless in any direct sense of the word. It is not good for anything, because it is good in itself.

The dialectical couple "useful-useless," which appears in one form as "work-play," may also appear as "real-unreal." Thus we find variants of the play or pleasure theory in which illusion, appearance, dream, or escape are supposed to constitute the value of the work of art. There are those like Vischer and K. Lange who hold that an immediate pleasure is yielded by a deliberate and conscious self-deception, issuing in a rapid oscillation between the illusion of reality and a sense of unreality. It is not at all clear why this situation should be pleasing rather than irritating, comic, perplexing, or downright agonizing. But having already rejected the pleasure

principle, we need do no more than detach the kernel of truth in the illusion theory, which is that the work of art is isolated, islanded in stage or picture-frame or their equivalent, in order to mark it off sharply from the surrounding physical reality. Physical objects necessarily refer beyond and outside themselves; the frame or pedestal is the artist's way of announcing that his work is not to be taken as a physical object, that it is self-contained. If to be real means to be ordered like a natural object in spatial, temporal, and causal relations to all other objects, then the work of art is certainly unreal.

In a second form the illusion theory finds pleasure-value arising indirectly through escape to a realm of facile compensation for the stern rebuffs of reality. Romantics everywhere, and to some extent the psychoanalysts, are chargeable with this view, though in justice to Freud it should be said he is expressly sceptical about it. For Professor De Witt Parker "a beautiful house is a dream of a house." The jargon of wish-fulfilment seems to me to throw less light and more genuine obscurity on art than any other. Art on this theory is simply self-magnification, and the cowardly retreat of a man who is too weak to face life: it realizes no genuine human value whatever. What can be admitted is that this day-dream theory correctly explains much bad art. If it must be a question of escape, surely true art enables us to escape from the intolerable, sterile day-dreaming of the romantic imagination back to the world of men.

In other words, illusion-theories inevitably call up "objective" theories, which in turn (Alexander, Kallischer, Haeberlin) tend to the opposed extreme of endowing the work of art with the same order of reality that we attribute to physical objects, a view which is equally unacceptable. Here Kant's discovery of a special sense of the term

subjectivity in art may be used to get out of the dilemma.

Kant started with the paradox that the aesthetic judgment while being subjective in the old sense, *i.e.*, personal and private, yet claims universality. When I say that the Matthew Passion is better music than William Tell, the judgment expresses the way the objects affect me. But it is a true judgment to which everyone ought to agree, whether they do or not. Yet how can a judgment be both private and necessary, both true and incapable of proof? In answer, Kant was led to explore the experience of beauty and find in it a new kind of communication in which a certain kind of knowledge is passed from one person to another without employing the usual means of communication, namely concepts, at all. Sounds, for instance, as dealt with by science are translated into conceptual terms; the objective nature of sound expressed in numbers and measures can be learned from any text-book, even by a man born deaf. But the musician communicates in a different way; he can convey what a sound does to him, what he privately feels about it, by arranging it with other sounds in a pattern. What becomes objective, communicable, and public here is not the nature of sound, but the subjective experience itself. In other words, the term subjective here has lost its derogatory sense, and signifies what reveals the true nature of a subject or person; it no longer means unreal or lacking in objectivity, but refers us to an order of objectivity radically different from that of the physical object, namely the reality of other minds, and of our own, and of their states. This is what Kant meant by his strong saying that there are no scientific geniuses; *viz.*, no reflection on the great scientist, but simply that he is the man who succeeds in eliminating every trace of

himself and his private states from his work; whereas the artistic genius makes the subjective itself objective, makes himself accessible to all, and for all time.

This would appear to be an important turning point not only in aesthetics, but in modern thought generally. After Descartes, and in spite of his dualism, confusion of the order of subjects with the order of physical objectivity was common; Descartes, in fact, did not work out the consequences of his dualism with sufficient rigour. In the interests of the new physics he was concerned to eliminate all anthropomorphism, all talk of purpose and ends, from the study of matter. He failed to bring out with sufficient distinctness the other side of his assertion; if it is a mistake to treat things as persons, it must be a mistake to treat persons as if they were things; or, if there is one sphere where anthropomorphism needs no apology, it is the study of man. The result of the one-sided direction imposed by Descartes on modern thought is that we still know less about minds and selves than medieval thinkers knew about matter. The methods of physics and mechanics confine us to the surface-play of personality and make its depths almost entirely inaccessible.

The *Einfühlung* or empathy theory of Lipps is a border-line case between objectivism and subjectivism, and may be regarded as something like a parody of the Kantian position outlined. Lipps calls aesthetic enjoyment "objectified self-enjoyment." The perception of a building, for example, sets up certain minute motor responses, it begins by changing the state of the body; but the next step is for us to change the object by endowing it with, projecting into it, the inner life, the organic rhythm whose actual locus is within us. It is what happens in our bodies which we read into the building

when we call it light and airy or heavy and imposing, and so on accordingly with the other arts. Of special importance is the fact that for Lipps it is not pleasure or unpleasure, *i.e.*, the feeling-tone, which matters in this act of empathetic insight, but the heightened inner life and self-activity. When an object enriches, extends, and strengthens my sense of life, it is aesthetically valuable.

But *Einfühlung* is expressly asserted to be a much wider phenomenon—indeed the general basis of our knowledge of other minds and their states—of which accordingly, aesthetic experience is a special case. In the final issue, then, it is the vitality of the architect which stimulates my sense of life. And yet in spite of all this Lipps's theory falls across the border into illusionism. "Feeling oneself into the object" means not that we feel the object as actually a revelation of someone else's conscious state, but that we feel *ourselves, as if* we were in the object. And again he says: "The other person is made by me out of myself." But it is clear that if the other centre of consciousness is simply a projection of my own, there is no real contact with it, no guarantee that it is anything more than a phantom. The life of others and (what is directly to our purpose) the life of a work of art remain a piece of psychological illusionism, the product of an "empathetic fallacy."

Illusionism and objectivism are both in part true and in part false. As regards the first, we have seen that art, judged from the point of view of the scientific order of objects, declares itself unreal by retreating within a frame. For the scientist, the historian, the police-magistrate, the events depicted in *Hamlet* simply do not occur; but who ever supposed them to be real in this sense? And by the same token, the proceedings of the scientific or demonstrative intellect are apt to appear

absurdly inadequate, if not unreal, from within the other order, that of subjects or selves in their interrelation—for example, if we try to *prove* what we may know beyond conjecture, that a certain individual is frightened or in love or bored. Again, to the eye of a dramatist an event like a collective panic in real life will appear as unsubstantial as a nightmare, in spite of its physical and material objectivity; for he will sense the absence of anything but disorder, a chaos of constricted muscles and pounding hearts, an agitation without name or human semblance. From within the order of subjects it may be rightly claimed that it is the world of *Hamlet* which is real, that of science which is unreal.

Intellectualist and objectivist theories in turn are right in asserting that art reveals reality, but wrong in assimilating this reality to that of the physical object. Thus Witasek compares the aesthetic judgment with the judgment of perception and finds the sole difference in the fact that the former is concerned with an ideal object. Fiedler defines art as intuitive thought, the development of representations, in the same way that logical thought is the development of concepts. If you ask what this intuitive thought is about, he replies "the real essence of things." Delacroix similarly says that in art man, liberated from practical aims, finds himself face to face with things as they really are. Croce of course regards artistic intuition as a theoretical activity, though taking place prior to the distinction of real and unreal.

Another group of objectivists, Hildebrand, Cornelius, and Wölfflin, are so influenced by scientific naturalism that they define painting as exposition for the eye. A cube, for instance, seen head on appears as a square. Through perspective and other devices painting aims at exhibiting objects in such a way that the beholder will

have the completest possible representation of their *true* form: it renders thoroughly visible what is only partially so in random everyday perception. Against this pseudo-scientific objectivism is the fact that what from the point of view of physiological optics would be distortion may be, and often is, great painting. The laws of art simply are not the laws of nature, and spatial form in painting has a different basis from the theoretical elaboration of space-relations which underlies our knowledge of objects.

There remain anti-intellectualist objectivists such as Bergson, who define art in vague terms such as the revelation of human personality, intuition of life or of individual character. The knowledge which art conveys is here properly restricted to the order of subjects. Further, in emphasizing its non-intellectual or intuitive character, they are asserting that this knowledge of the states of others is direct, not mediated.

But granting this, they are open to the sweeping objection, which is the final objection to the miscellaneous theories included under this topic, that they all commit the error of confusing aesthetic value with truth value. Knowledge is power, and art (as Plato knew) is also power, but that can be no reason for subordinating either of them to practical purposes; in fact they rapidly lose their specific values if you do. In exactly the same way, though art does yield basic knowledge of the order of subjects or selves, it is not *as* knowledge or truth, but in some other specifically *aesthetic* way, not yet determined, that it is actually valued. Namely, I should say, it is valuable as the actual experience of some human emotion. The only direct communication between subjects is the communication of feeling; and though this has weighty consequences for psychology or philosophy, it is not as

having these consequences—*i.e.*, not as knowledge—but directly as emotion felt that art is valued.

We thus reach the theory that the essence of art is the expression and communication of emotions. In modern form it originates with Kant, though it could be traced to Aristotle, especially in his theory of music, or to remarks of Plato in the *Laws*, *Symposium*, and *Timaeus*. Tolstoy, Volkelt, Hermann Cohen, Baensch, Odebrecht, Jonas Cohen, Ducasse, Bosanquet, Carritt, provide variants on this theme.

Croce fits into it only in the second instance; for his identification of expression with intuition, like other celebrated identifications, that of philosophy with history, or of aesthetics with general linguistics, is both arbitrary and indefensible. Intuition, we saw, was a preliminary form of knowledge; but if so, we must effect a disjunction between it and expression in the emotional sense which is clearly not primarily theoretic at all. If in spite of this Croce, outside the covers of his *Estetica*, emphasizes the lyrical character of all art, and defines it as a feeling enclosed in the circle of a representation, this is simply the dialectical revenge by which the true sense of the term *expression* forces its way through a hard crust of resisting theory.

Another variant which we should reject is the "significant form" of Fry, Bell, and Read. When absolutely compelled to, but not otherwise, they explain that a significant form is one that arouses aesthetic emotion. It is significant, then, emotionally, and so far so good; but it is significant of and for only one unique *ad hoc* emotion which, like Witasek's *ästhetische Gefühl* or Sully's aesthetic sentiment, has nothing in common with feelings such as pity, fear, or love, emotions of real life. And if so, this phantom aesthetic emotion is impossible to

distinguish from the dilettante's rapture—*i.e.*, it is simply a synonym for pleasure.

At the same time formalism is an essential component of the emotion theory; that is, if the whole range of human emotions be taken as the material to be formed. Pattern and rhythm are the categories or principles of order generating emotional value and emotional objectivity, just as in another dimension of order, space, time, and causation generate theoretic objectivity and value for knowledge. To establish this point we must examine a capital distinction made by Alain, Baensch, and others (and traceable in classical aesthetics to thinkers like Hegel and Aristotle), the distinction between what we may call *commotion* and emotion: between the crude physiological disturbance which is not art, though it is the indispensable material for art, and emotion as it exists when this agitation has been composed through being subjected to order in a pattern.

The chief objection to the emotion theory is that it is too wide. "The spontaneous involuntary expression of fear, anger or delight," says the Earl of Listowel, "is surely in itself neither beautiful nor artistic." And Moritz Geiger: "To allow feelings to stream forth in words, sounds and gestures, is not art, nor even a necessary feature of the artist's activity. What is necessary is rather the forming of material to an artistic pattern, of stone into a statue, of sounds to a melody, of bodily motions into a dance."

As applied to commotion all this is perfectly true. It is not art; it possesses no human value; it is not even expressive, as you see from the failure of psychology to go beyond the coarse discriminations of common sense in its attempt to classify emotions on a physiological basis, or from the fact that no face is less expressive than

that of a man who has lost control of his features, or from the fact that nothing resembles the paroxysm of one passion more than the paroxysm of another. Commotion is a form of physiological bondage which weighs heavily on man's spirit, and rightly; and it is generally in vain that he seeks deliverance through taking thought, or through energetic willing. Thus we are in a position to see how emotion as a liberation from such bondage would contain its own worth. Such liberation occurs where the disintegrated body is restored to order through the agency of a formalized pattern of bodily motion, or dance, and all the arts may be traced to this source, whether it be the muscles of the arm, of the throat and chest, or of the whole body which execute the dance. It is through pattern that commotion becomes emotion, the primitive cry a song; agitation becomes composure through the agency of composition. If, as Geiger would have us, we hold the two terms, form and feeling, apart, nothing remains but composition—the dull academically correct song with no cry in it.

Thus there emerge two complementary truths which seem to throw a flood of light on our subject: (1) Nothing which does not move us can be a work of art; (2) Nothing which merely moves us can be a work of art. Pattern without commotion is arid; commotion without pattern is turgid. Fused, they reveal some form of human emotion, heighten, enlarge, extend, or clarify the possibilities of feeling.

The theory in question admits terms like initiation, understanding, discovery, and learning, so long as it is expressly recognized that intellectual initiation, understanding, *etc.*, enter into the matter only in auxiliary and secondary respects. The human being is not born emotionally ready equipped, he has to learn to feel

humanly, just as much as to think rationally or to act morally; and learning to feel is not the same as learning to think, though it is true that these functions are not exercised separately, and that thinking may have profound bearings upon feeling. Thus after a child attains the age of reason he will need different poetry and music than before. So too with the race: it may be the progress of the intellect which makes it impossible to feel as our own the emotions of an earlier age; but the fact remains that what is acquired in such a change is not an intellectual truth, not a thought-value, but a feeling-value, and it will be embodied not in philosophy or science, but in art.

This has the advantage of removing a paradox: that we rightly revere the great art of the past as unmatched, and that we rightly match ourselves with it. A man who, as Comte said, learns for the first time the true nature of grief by reading a poem two thousand years old, may be impelled to write a poem of his own because in no two ages does the same passion or emotion appear in identical form. We can learn what men felt in the past from their art; we can even feel it, but not as our own. Emotion strains forward towards the future as surely as knowledge or action does.

It may be of interest, in conclusion, to interpret a familiar document, the *Symposium* of Plato, in this sense. It is true that only one emotion, that of love, is envisaged here; but its importance and range are such that several thinkers, such as H. Cohen and Gentile, are prepared to regard it as the primary concern of aesthetic experience. Lucka, for another, says that any work of art is love become visible.

The Platonic Eros is the offspring of a divine father, Expediency, and a human mother, Poverty; he is thus

perpetually in straits, indigent, and at the same time inexhaustibly resourceful and full of ruses. This means, first, that we should avoid confusing love, as a creative or daimonic function, with the object loved. The function has none of the qualities of the object. Love is not lovely, but terrible—a terrible burden of fecundity, physical or spiritual. In itself it is indigence, privation, the absence of those values, such as beauty, which are found in the loved object. As we said of commotion, it is a positive dis-value, a form of bondage; tending blindly to overflow into expression, yet at the same time constituting the greatest single obstacle to expression.

Further, the indirectness and ingenuity displayed in artistic creation correspond well enough to the fertility of expedient through which the demon achieves his object, generation into beauty. Liberation from commotion comes through a doubly indirect process; not by acting on the commotion itself, but by shaping some physical object, which in turn as we saw, means subjecting the disturbed body to a rhythmic order of motions or dance. Only through this expedient can agitation resolve itself into composure; only by this indirect process can minds be brought into direct communication; only through this ruse is actualized the saving grace of pattern, of which Plato wrote elsewhere, "The Muses have given us harmony as an ally of our soul in its efforts to reduce those disordered movements within us to order and unison."

The *Symposium* culminates in the picture of a progressive initiation in love, which necessarily follows from these dynamic premises. It seems to be an emotional development parallel to the growth of knowledge and science, but not to be confused with the latter. It is an increasing liberation from the bondage of commotion, which nevertheless remains a constant, the same primitive

urge to creation. It is a progressive advance towards ever new and unsuspected depths of love. I may be mistaken, but I will suggest that if you were to pass from, say, Greek sculpture to the poetry of Dante and Petrarch, and then to the music of Bach, you would be exhibiting stages in just such a progressive initiation as Plato here has in mind.

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# MONTESQUIEU AND PENAL LAW REFORM IN ENGLAND

F. T. H. FLETCHER

In moderate governments, the love of one's country, shame, and the fear of blame are restraining motives capable of preventing a multitude of crimes. Here the greatest punishment of a bad action is conviction. The civil laws have therefore a softer way of correcting and do not require so much force and severity. In those states a good legislator is less bent upon punishing than preventing crimes; he is more attentive to inspire good morals than to inflict penalties. [Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, VI, p. ix.]

## I

IN Montesquieu's philosophy, laws in general are necessary relationships inherent in the very nature of things.[1] Civil laws may therefore be said to have a double function: on the passive side, they define "natural" relationships between different people and things; on the active side, they aim at reknitting "natural" relationships that have been dissolved. It is in this latter function that they may become penal.

But the relationship destroyed by theft, *i.e.*, the unlawful separation of property from its rightful owner, is not entirely reconstituted by restoring the stolen goods or by depriving the offender of something of equivalent value, *e.g.*, of time or money. Society assumes that the discord between the thief and his environment cuts deeper than the single offence, and indeed arises from a potentially permanent fund of "criminality" in the offender which it is salutary, both for his own sake and for the sake of society, to dissolve by correction.[2] It is in this function that "penal law" becomes "redemptive law," in

[1] *Esprit des lois* (*Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Laboulaye), III, p. 89.
[2] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 67.

that it aims at restoring the criminal to a relation of harmony with his environment.

The criminal law, therefore, arises out of nature and aims at social utility. For its sanctions and validity it looks both before and after. Its utility, however, will be determined by its relation to the spirit of the society in which it functions. In a tyrannical state, where there is little or no public or private conscience, a mild law will be ineffectual;[3] but in a moderate state, where the individual is to a large extent his own judge, and public opinion a constant censor of conduct, the law can be effective without being harsh.

The three leading principles in Montesquieu's philosophy of criminal law may, then, be thus stated: (i) it should be rooted in Nature; (ii) it should have utility for its goal; (iii) it should be relative to its environment.

Since law is rooted in nature, it should aim at assisting nature, not obstructing it; *i.e.*, it should promote life, not destroy it. Every punishment should partake of the nature of the crime to which it applies; *i.e.*, it should be a kind of *lex talionis*, exacting an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.[4] Hence, under the canon law, sacrilege will be punished by excommunication, that is, deprivation of the benefits of the religion which has been outraged. Under the moral law, offenders will be deprived of the advantages of living in the society whose manners have been violated. Under the civil law, unassimilated spirits who threaten the peace of society will be constrained to involuntary peace by imprisonment or exile. And under the criminal law, a man who has deprived another of life or property will be deprived of his own life or property. But since the nature out of which these laws arise includes

[3] *Ibid.*, III, p. 241.
[4] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 67.

human nature, they should also contain a proper ingredient of humanity.

The utility of a law must be measured by reference both to the individuals who place themselves within its jurisdiction, and to the society whose interests it is designed to protect; since these are the two elements which it is the function of law to restore to harmonious relations. It is more useful for the criminal to be reformed than to be punished; and for the potential crime to be prevented than to be cured. It is more useful to society to acquire a good citizen than to lose a bad one. A punitive law is neutral and yields no moral revenue to the state or to the offender; a curative or a prophylactic law is positive and shows an abundant return in moral values.

Since law should be relative to the tone of the state, it is unnecessary in a free and civilized state for it to invade realms of behaviour that are adequately policed by other forces, *e.g.*, conscience, religion, honour.[5] It is useless for it to be severe in countries where the greatest punishment for a crime is to be convicted of it.[6]

It is not the present purpose to criticize this conception of criminal law, but only to detect its impact upon legal, political, and philosophical opinion in England. That impact was mediated largely through Beccaria's *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* (1764), which was written under the direct inspiration of Montesquieu.[7] The Italian writer systematizes, however, what had been somewhat occasional and unorganized reflections in Montesquieu; but the unifying principles of his philosophy are the same—utility, humanity, proportion.

[5] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 323.
[6] *Ibid.*, III, p. 240.
[7] Beccaria admits this in his preface.

## II

It was generally recognized by eighteenth-century writers that, by comparison with other countries, English criminal law was good; but that, in relation to ideal justice, it left much to be desired.

It was not without justification that Voltaire, struck by the relative humanity of English law, based all his projects of reform in penal legislation upon it.[1] Blackstone extolled it with an enthusiasm scarcely curbed by an intimate knowledge of its manifold imperfections: he considered its superiority to lie in that it defined crimes more clearly and made penalties less arbitrary than anywhere else, and in that it excluded torture.[2] He went so far as to regard *trial by jury* as the very stronghold of British liberty, and the one thing that could save it from the dissolution with which Montesquieu had threatened it. But he was not blind to its insufficiencies, and confessed that "even here we shall occasionally find room to remark some particulars that seem to want revision and amendment." The greater number of his contemporaries who interested themselves in the subject at all, shared this view, and many expressed it.

Their outcry seems at this date curiously restrained when compared with the abuses against which it was directed. That is doubtless because these were not always recognized as abuses, and because discords between law and justice which now appear to us intolerable, to them were scarcely perceptible. Contemporaries were oddly blind to the significance of the horrors that were daily enacted before their eyes; indeed, many enjoyed them and counted it among the major thrills of life to witness a hanging at Tyburn. This depraved taste is amply

[1] Voltaire, *A.B.C.*, 15e entretien.

[2] *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 1765-9, book IV, chap. i.

illustrated by the preponderance of crime reports in the journals of the time.[3] There is a grim humour in Blackstone's "apology" for the drawing and burning of women convicted of treason: this mild treatment was accorded to them, he tells us, because "the natural modesty of the sex forbids the exposing and publicly mangling their bodies."[4] Indeed, the most common complaint brought against the criminal laws about the middle of the eighteenth century was not their severity but their ineffectiveness. The relation between these two things, however, although fully admitted, was not very well understood. It seemed rather paradoxical that, in spite of a rigorous law, crime should still increase. Montesquieu had given a perfectly adequate explanation when he said: "The excessive severity of the laws hinders their execution: when the punishment surpasses all measure, impunity is often preferred to it."[5] The laws were indeed so inequitable and so inordinately severe in some cases of petty misdemeanour that juries, in order to evade them, repeatedly refused to convict; with the result that many crimes which deserved punishment went unpunished because there was no middle course between impunity and sheer barbarism.[6] The law failed because it was out of

[3] *Cf.* D. M. Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution*, New Haven, 1930, introduction; J. G. Phillimore, *History of England during the Reign of George the Third*, London, 1863, I, chap. i; J. Murdoch, *A History of Constitutional Reform in Great Britain and Ireland*, Glasgow, 1885, p. 26; Alexander Andrews, *The Eighteenth Century*, London, 1856, *passim*.

[4] *Commentaries*, book IV, chap. vi (end). The punishment of male traitors was far more terrible.

[5] *Esprit des lois*, III, p. 251.

[6] Blackstone, *Commentaries*, IV, p. 13, remarks: "So dreadful a list [*i.e.*, of one hundred and sixty capital offences] instead of diminishing, increases the number of offences. The injured, through compassion, will often forbear to prosecute; juries, through compassion, will sometimes forget their oaths, and either acquit the guilty or mitigate the nature of the offence; and judges, through compassion, will respite one half of the convicts and recommend them to the royal mercy."

tune with human nature, and because it neglected the elementary principle of "making the punishment fit the crime."[7]

Henry Fielding, the novelist and justice of the peace, was one of the first to reveal in literary form this deplorable state of the criminal law. As early as 1751, inquiring into "The Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers," he complained that, if caught, the felon often escaped prosecution because of the fear, indolence, delicacy, avarice, tenderheartedness, or poverty of the prosecutor; if prosecuted, it was hard to get a conviction; if convicted, the robber was too frequently pardoned; if condemned, he was made the object of the solicitude and compassion of a crowd that accompanied his triumphal progress to the gallows. Dr. Johnson, about the same time, found fault with the disproportion between crimes and punishments, with what he called "the capricious distinctions of guilt," and with the notion that "inflexible rigour and sanguinary justice" would prevent crime or lead to reformation.[8] Oliver Goldsmith went so far as to question "the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature."[9] Blackstone considered the number of capital offences (160) unduly large;[10] Lord Kames made a similar complaint;[11] and John Howard recommended their reduction to four. All felt that for laws to be effective, they must observe a fair proportion between the offence and the punishment. One writer pointed out, after Montesquieu, how obvious it was that if robbery received the same retribution as murder, the robber, fearing the gallows in any case, would murder

[7] *Esprit des lois*, III, p. 257.
[8] *The Rambler*, no. 114, 1751.
[9] *The Vicar of Wakefield*, chap. xxvii.
[10] *Commentaries*, IV, p. 13.
[11] *Historical Law Tracts* (*Criminal Law*), 1776.

his victim in the hope of concealing his crime.[12] A similar point was made by Blackstone, who quoted Montesquieu directly to this effect.[13]

The attack upon the criminal law was carried even into the strongholds of the legislature; for in 1770 Sir William Meredith moved in the House of Commons for a committee to be appointed to consider capital offences. His plea is characteristic of his time.

> Our criminal code [he said] breathes the spirit of Draco, whose laws were written in blood. In a well-regulated state nothing is more requisite than to proportion the punishment to the crime, and thereby satisfy the mind of the people that equal justice is administered to every delinquent. At present, however, the crimes of larceny and petty theft, as well as of treason and murder, are alike punished with death. . . . From seeing the number of criminals that are pardoned, people are induced to commit offences under the idea that they can do so with impunity.[14]

And so the chorus of complaints goes on, providing a kind of atmosphere or background for the slow and tardy reforms that were from time to time effected. At the end of the century, however, in spite of the undoubted alleviations in the penal law, it differs little from what it was in the middle. So in 1793 we find Dr. James Beattie still repeating the old argument that laws which are unduly severe defeat their own end by being disregarded;[15] Thomas Paine using bitter words about the mercilessness of the Game Laws,[16] and even receiving the

[12] *Increase of Robberies by the Increase of the Metropolis* (anon. in Chalmers's *British Essayists*, XXII, pp. 336-40). This writer makes considerable use of Montesquieu and Fielding. *Cf. Esprit des lois*, III, p. 258: "It is a great evil in our country that we award the same punishment to a man convicted of highway robbery, and to one who both robs and murders."

[13] *Commentaries*, IV, pp. 16-7; *Esprit des lois*, III, p. 251.

[14] Cavendish's *Debates of the House of Commons*, II, p. 89. Fox seconded the motion, which was carried, and the committee was appointed.

[15] James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, 1790-3, I, p. 320.

[16] T. Paine, *Rights of Man*, 1791.

virtual support of his arch-adversary, Sir Brooke Boothby;[17] and Mary Wollstonecraft confronting Burke and his smug reverence for law in general with the abominations and desolations of the English penal law in the past.[18]

## III

While these writers, and many more such, were busy in their destructive function of breaking down the idols of the past, there were others whose thoughts turned towards the future, and who sought upon what principles a reform of the criminal law might be effected. In their writings, too, the spirit of Montesquieu and Beccaria can be clearly discerned working in the cause of mercy, humanity, and justice.

At the very outset, they discovered, by reference to the *Esprit des lois*, the elementary but vital principle that law ought always to be in harmony with the moral and physical characteristics of the country to which it applied —with its religion, its manners and customs, its history, its climate, its soil, *etc.*—and therefore that particular laws should constantly be scrutinized to see to what extent the spirit of the nation had progressed beyond them.[1] Beccaria had carried the theory a further step forward by repeating after Montesquieu the principle that punishments ought to be very carefully correlated with offences, and by indicating in some detail what he considered the correct proportions to be. By thus pinning the abstract principle down to concrete cases, he brought it within the comprehension of practical politics. Blackstone followed faithfully in Beccaria's train: it was absurd, as well as

[17] Brooke Boothby, *Observations on the Appeal to the Old Whigs* (in *Comparative Display*, 1793, II, p. 479).

[18] *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (in *Comparative Display*, II, p. 417).

[1] *E.g.*, no. 9 of the *Centinel*, Nov. 12, 1757, II, pp. 98-101; and James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, I, pp. 317-9.

wrong, he maintained, to apply the same punishment to totally different crimes, or even to crimes that were the same in kind but differed widely in degree.[2] But perhaps Blackstone's greatest service to the cause of justice was his intervention in the House on various occasions when penal reforms came under discussion. He and William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland) constituted themselves the official interpreters of Montesquieu in the legislature; and diverted his realism into humanitarian channels. Their debt to the *Esprit des lois* is worth considering.

It had been an essential part of Montesquieu's "naturalism" that punishments ought to partake of the *nature* of the crime. But it was felt that since crime was frequently barbarous, it could be no part of a penal code that aimed at eradicating barbarism from society to punish it with barbarism. Equity might demand it, but neither humanity nor utility did. Montesquieu's plea to "tirer chaque peine de la nature du crime" was, therefore, either neglected or interpreted in a very wide sense. A sounder basis for criminal law was that laid down by Beccaria, namely, that penalties ought to be proportioned to crimes, without necessarily partaking of their nature. With this derogation, Montesquieu's doctrine of a penal law founded in nature and aiming at social utility was faithfully enough taught by reformers in England. They differed from him mainly in their conception of what "Nature" might be.

In Montesquieu, nature is a somewhat fluid and intangible thing—a vague system of "necessary relationships" which, at the level of social ethics and politics, were formulated into laws, manners, and customs, but which otherwise remained, or should remain, unformulated. There was, therefore, for him a "positive law"

[2] *Commentaries*, IV, p. 17.

which regulated certain social relationships and defined certain social duties—that is, a formulated law which, by a curious spiritual twist, transformed natural rights into social obligations; and there was a "natural law" which permeated in a pure state all relationships over and above the social relationships. It was only in this latter rarefied atmosphere that "natural rights" could be said to exist; and true liberty consisted not in protecting or asserting them, but in *leaving them alone*.[3] Liberty of speech and conscience, security of body and of mind, such things as these are strictly outside the competence of law; and positive law, in its own limited sphere, must be determined entirely by the *nature of the society* to which it applies and by the good it can work in that society. Unfortunately Montesquieu often uses the word "Nature" where he plainly means the social fabric,[4] the whole texture of his thought being altogether too conservative to admit the intrusion of any universal "natural law" into a long-established system of "positive law." His own ideas being insufficiently lucid, it is not surprising that all his followers up to the time of Paley and Bentham should be confused. They failed to distinguish between his appeal to a nature wrought into a social pattern, and Locke's appeal to Natural Rights that sought their sanction outside society.

It was this misreading of Montesquieu's essential utilitarianism which led to that well-intentioned but muddle-headed movement labelled "Humanitarianism,"—

[3] *Esprit des lois*, IV, p. 323.

[4] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 67: "Tout ce que je dis est puisé dans la *Nature* et est très favorable à la liberté du citoyen [not 'de l'homme']." In volume III, p. 246, Montesquieu again says: "Suivons la Nature, qui a donné aux hommes la honte comme leur fléau;" but he goes on to show that this "natural" shame only exists in free and enlightened countries; and he insists everywhere on the relativity of criminal law in general to *government*, not to Nature.

an orphan of philosophy having closer kinship with Locke than with Montesquieu. Thus, George Wallace, the Scottish advocate, tried to demonstrate with an imposing array of logic that civil law was merely an aspect of natural law, and that its true end was to oblige men to observe the law of nature.[5] The theory as it appears in Blackstone declares that as individual rights are founded in nature, and law exists to secure those rights, therefore law must have nature as its basis. Now in a state of nature, Blackstone assumed, *every* individual was endowed by the law of nature with the right to punish those who offended against it. In a state of society, that right was delegated by original contract from individuals to the ruler, who by virtue of it could punish offenders against society even with death itself.[6] In short, both Blackstone and Wallace commit an error which Montesquieu avoided, namely, of supposing that civil law remained identical with natural law, instead of being a creation from it; and that the former was concerned with "rights" which existed only in the domain of the latter. They failed to see that the very idea of property, upon which the greater part of the civil law ultimately rests, is essentially a social relationship and not a "natural" one; and that ownership, therefore, is not a natural right, but only a social convention. Convinced that the only true sanction of laws lay in their origins, not in their ends, they were obliged to believe that the social and political structure which had grown out of the idea of property, possessed something of the sacrosanctity of a natural law; and that, therefore, individuals were placed in their respective orders of subordination in the state by the free operation

[5] *System of the Principles of the Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1760), p. 48.
[6] *Commentaries*, book IV, chap. i.

of nature. Privilege itself was, therefore, a product of nature, even more than of utility.

It was an easy step from the somewhat crass "naturalism" of Wallace and Blackstone to the theocracy of Burke, who, substituting God for Nature, saw the whole of mankind marshalled by a "divine tactic" into a hierarchy of classes, and the whole law issuing from the lips of a divine legislator.

Both Montesquieu and his English followers, however, agree in assessing laws largely according to "utilitarian" standards—but for different reasons. In the case of Montesquieu, since positive law is natural law transformed by its compression into the constricted framework of civil society, its usefulness can be measured only by its success in maintaining that society in its most perfect form. In the case of Blackstone, Wallace, and Eden, no adequate distinction is made between that which is useful to men collected into societies, and that which serves the individual interests of men in a state of nature. Hence, their appeals to "utility" are often merely disguised appeals to nature. Seeking, as they do, to apply utilitarian standards to the individual's interests, rather than to those of the social unit to which he belongs, they lose touch with historical reality and stray down the paradisal by-paths of humanity and compassion. In Montesquieu, as in Bentham, the stress is always upon the whole society, and the facts of history are admitted as objective and real. Since, however, it sometimes happens that the interests of individuals coincide with the interests of the state, Blackstone is quite within his rights in quoting Montesquieu as authority concerning the dangers of undue severity, the corrective not expiatory nature of punishment, the due proportion between crime and punishment, the certainty rather than the severity of penalties, *etc.*

William Eden (Lord Auckland), the most systematic writer and worker in the cause of a humanitarian penal law, founds all criminal law upon Natural Justice, Public Utility, Wisdom, and Mercy,[7] and fills his pages with quotations from the *Esprit des lois* to the same effect as Blackstone had done before him. His book is indeed intended as an appendage to, and a commentary upon, that part of the *Commentaries* which deals with the criminal code; and it does little more than gather up into a separate body of argument Montesquieu's and Blackstone's scattered pleas in favour of humanity and usefulness. Written when its author was but twenty-six, this book was by far the strongest plea for penal reform advanced in England during the latter part of the eighteenth century, and not only attracted much attention both at home and abroad, but laid the foundations for some of those important practical reforms that were later carried out by its author in Parliament.

## IV

The influence of Montesquieu upon penal-law reform in Europe is now generally recognized. "His spirit," says Dunning,[1] "is that which ultimately effected in Europe a transformation of the whole system of crimes and penalties." That spirit was certainly hard at work in England to instil into the criminal law, justice, humanity, and usefulness. The movement of reform shows a great increase of momentum after the appearance of the *Esprit des lois*.

It is characteristic, perhaps, of England that the appeal to humanity should prove almost ineffectual. England is constitutionally suspicious of sentimentalism

[7] *Principles of Penal Law*, London, 1771, pp. 6-7.

[1] W. A. Dunning, *History of Political Theories*, New York, 1902, II, p. 416.

in any form,[2] though in the last resort her people are perhaps the most sentimental in the world. Paley quite definitely, indeed, opposed "humanity" as a principle in reform as being inferior to that of "utility." Nevertheless, a few somewhat grudging reforms were pushed through the House by early humanitarians like Hanbury, Bunbury, Blackstone, and Eden. Of these Eden was the most spectacular, as well as the most consistently faithful to the letter, if not to the spirit, of Montesquieu. Immediately after publishing his *Principles of Penal Legislation* in 1771, and while still a very young man, Eden abandoned the law for public life and became under-secretary of state to Lord Suffolk. In this office, says his son and biographer, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, "he continued . . . to support the mitigation of our harsh laws, and in 1778 carried the Act, 19 George III, the principal objects of which were to enforce a strict and conciliatory attention both to the morals and health of prisoners, to introduce a system of solitary confinement for certain crimes, and to establish penitentiary houses."[3] He was understood on this occasion to have the friendly support of John Howard and Blackstone in framing the Act, and Howard was appointed one of the inspectors under it. Blackstone, who was Montesquieu's most slavish follower in England, undoubtedly took a prominent part in the reform of the prisons, was a great friend of Howard, and a chief promoter of the scheme of penitentiaries. He also took a leading part in inducing Howard to accept an inspectorship of prisons under the new Act—a circumstance which was to be richly fraught with consequences.

[2] *Cf. Esprit des lois*, III, p. 241: "Extremely happy men, and extremely unhappy men, are equally inclined to be severe."

[3] *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland*, London, 1861-2, I, p. xiv. *Cf.* also J. Field's *Life of Howard*, 1850, pp. 223, 288.

Howard's noble but exclusive devotion to prison reform may be regarded as the logical conclusion of the whole "humanitarian" movement, and the point at which that movement (to use Bentham's words) was "lost in the sand." Instead of seeking to purify the source of law, it attacked it on its outer fringes and aimed at alleviating the sufferings of men already condemned by it.

In order to restore the problem to its true context, the Blackstonian current of humanitarianism, which had momentarily diverted its course, had to be repudiated with a rigour that now appears cold-blooded. Yet pragmatically it was pre-eminently justified, since it proved far more fruitful in actual widespread consequences than anything Howard ever accomplished. Inappropriately enough, it was reserved for a clergyman of the Church of England, William Paley, to deny the validity of the appeal to a "natural" law (humanity) and to found all justice upon its immediate object, social utility. Returning to the *Esprit des lois*, he developed Montesquieu's reasoning solely along the dimension of social utility. Paley's position is perfectly logical. Civil liberty, he maintains, consists in "the not being restrained by any law but what conduces in a greater degree to the public welfare;"[4] whence it follows: (i) that restraint itself is an evil; (ii) that this evil ought to be counterbalanced by some positive public advantage; (iii) that the burden of proof of this is upon the legislature; (iv) that a law being found to produce no sensible good effects is a sufficient reason for repealing it. Here, then, in liberty itself, is a rational basis for reform, if any be required. But how does Paley apply it? He would revise the Game Laws, the Poor Law, laws against papists and dissenters; but he would not favour a lenient criminal law. The fact

[4] *Moral and Political Philosophy*, ed. of 1786, chap. v, p. 441.

that a severe one is never applied in its full rigour does not alarm him as it does Montesquieu and his English humanitarian disciples. Indeed, it acts as an efficient deterrent to crime and thus fulfils one of the chief functions of penal law, which is to prevent crime.[5] "By this expedient," he remarks, "few actually suffer death, whilst the dread and danger of it hang over the lives of many. The tenderness of the law cannot be taken advantage of."[6] The frequency of capital executions in England, therefore, he regards as a necessary product of her liberty, the size of her great cities, and the lack of any punishment short of death possessing a sufficient degree of terror, *e.g.*, torture.[7] He even regards torture as perfectly justified in some cases.[8] He would also prefer that ten innocent people be punished rather than that one guilty person escape, because, though every individual is entitled to respect and justice, his personal interest is negligible beside that of the society in which he lives. He is subject to the institutional machinery he has helped to create, and it is far more vital that this should go on working efficiently than that he should be extracted from its wheels at the peril of the state.[9]

It now remained for the greatest of the utilitarian philosophers, Jeremy Bentham, to work out to its furthest consequences the utility-principle enunciated by Paley. His "*point de départ*" is a revulsion from Blackstone, under whom he had sat impatiently as a student at Oxford, and a direct denial of his theory of an "original

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 533.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 533.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 541.
[8] This is to be contrasted with *Esprit des lois*, III, p. 261: "I was about to say that torture might be expedient in despotic governments. . . . But I hear the *voice of Nature* crying out against me."
[9] *Moral and Political Philosophy*, p. 552.

contract," *i.e.*, of a natural law preceding legislation and determining its development. "Rights," he maintained, could not be founded upon abstract general principles, but only upon a positive law which, having social utility for its aim, must at *all* times be guided by it. Individual rights were, therefore, a mere by-product of social usefulness.

Bentham once acknowledged how, as early as 1769, Montesquieu had helped to "set" him on the principle of utility.[10] But in Montesquieu the truth had been "lost in the sand."[11] However, Bentham recognized that Montesquieu had been ill-served by his disciples in England, and particularly by Blackstone, who had grossly misrepresented him.[12] Indeed, in spite of Bentham's ungenerous treatment of Montesquieu in general, he does not hesitate to adopt from him the view that the utility of a law is in large measure determined by its harmonious relation with the physical and moral circumstances of the community. The whole of the *Essay on the Influence of Time and Place in Matters of Legislation* gives development to this capital aspect of law, in full recognition of its debt to Montesquieu.[13]

It must be confessed, however, that Bentham, while admitting the greatness of Montesquieu's genius in general, lets no opportunity pass of carping at his "pseudo-metaphysical sophistry."[14] His whole attitude towards him is summed up in a passage of the *Essay on the Promulgation of Laws*:

> Montesquieu has often misled his readers; he employs all his mind, that is to say, a mind of the first order, in discovering amid

[10] *Works*, X, p. 54.
[11] *Ibid.*, III, p. 158.
[12] *Comment on the Commentaries* (in *Works*, I, pp. 33-4).
[13] *Works*, I, p. 173, note.
[14] *Fragment on Government* (in *Works*, I, p. 270, note).

the chaos of laws, the reasons which may have influenced the legislators. He has been desirous of lending them a wisdom of intention in institutions the most contradictory and the most extravagant. But when we agree with him that he has discovered their true motives, at what conclusion do we arrive? They acted upon a reason, but was this a good reason? If they had made a law directly opposed to it, would they not have done better? Such is the examination which always remains to be made; such is the examination to which he never descends. . . . The science of legislation, though it has made but little progress, is much more simple than one would be led to believe after reading Montesquieu. The principle of utility directs all reasons to a single centre: the reasons which apply to the detail of arrangements are only subordinate views of utility.[15]

If Bentham is here bringing a charge against Montesquieu for declining to act the critic on every occasion, it is evidently misplaced. Montesquieu never pretended to be a reformer; his aim is ever to discover the inward truth or spirit of existing laws and to describe it in historical terms. Bentham is nothing *but* a reformer, and his attitude throughout his writings is prophetic and aggressive.

Though Bentham's gibe at Montesquieu's "metaphysics" is certainly unjust, the somewhat unorganized ideas of the *Esprit des lois* upon the penal law did not, perhaps, distinguish clearly enough between the relative and the absolute. Montesquieu applied a little indiscriminately in his philosophy of law a temporal value, utility, and an eternal value, ideal justice. It must also be conceded that his more immediate followers in England, Wallace, Blackstone, Eden, and Burke, haunted by the shade of Locke, did develop his ideas along metaphysical lines, and so evolved a plea for penal reform founded upon Nature and Humanity. Paley and Bentham, erring in the contrary sense, placed all the emphasis upon the immediate goal of law, and tested it exclusively by the

[15] *Works*, I, p. 102.

temporal value, social utility. This leaves out of account, as Montesquieu's less rigid doctrine did not, those individuals who, by virtue of special gifts of vision, or of a constitutional inability to understand the limitations of social convention, cannot or—because of their faith—dare not compress their individuality into the standard mould prepared for it by the social law. Such individuals are part of the price at which the "greatest good of the greatest number" must be bought.

The school of Blackstone did, indeed, get "lost in the sand," or, as some might say, in the uncharted ocean of absolute Truth; the school of Paley and Bentham, by sticking to good, solid earth, was fruitful in far-reaching reforms. If Sir Robert Peel actually put them through parliament, it was Bentham who directly or indirectly formulated the measures designed to make the penal laws more equitable (*and*, incidentally, more humane), to protect the poor, children, lunatics, and animals, to regularize contracts, deeds, and company law, to make parliamentary representation more just, *etc.*[16]

All of which goes to prove, not that Montesquieu or Blackstone was wrong, but that (as Flaubert said) the real does not yield to the ideal, but confirms it.

[16] "After frequent correspondence and consultations with Brougham, Mackintosh and Bentham, the father of all law reform, Peel, introduced his measures. Aided by a magnanimous spirit from the Opposition, he thoroughly revised and humanised the criminal code, abolishing the penalty of death for many petty crimes" (*Cambridge Modern History*, X, p. 585). Dicey gives an interesting list of the reforms first proposed by Bentham and actually carried through.

# ART AND PHILISTIA

## Some Sidelights on Aesthetic Taste in Montreal and Toronto, 1880-1910

G. Campbell McInnes

NOT the least disadvantage against which we have had to contend in the building up of reputable collections of works of art, and the foundation of a vigorous national art, has been the persistent disparagement of things Canadian, and the lag—accentuated by local snobbery, ignorance, and parochialism—between the recognition of what was good thirty years ago, and what is good to-day. The assumption that nothing from so new and raw a country as Canada could possibly be aesthetically valuable, though unfortunate, was regrettably true, at least until the late eighties. But that this should have led to a flooding of the Canadian market with patently inferior European work, and later, on the basis of a misplaced patriotic fervour, to the praise of anything Canadian, irrespective of its aesthetic integrity, can only be a cause for self-reproach.

A study of the art movements in Eastern Canada during the gestation period—roughly from 1880 to 1910—reveals many strange, sad, and amusing anomalies resulting from the growing conflict between those who clung tenaciously to the European *salons* and those who were becoming increasingly conscious of the need for patronizing local art. Nor is such a survey without its moral implications, for only too often is it a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The struggles and the foolishness of the *fin-de-siècle* period have their counterpart to-day. But if repetition should make us despondent, it is at least true that controversy, however bigoted, is better than

apathy. Besides which we have to-day an advantage lacking to the "rebels" of the early 1900's; we are living after a genuine revolution in Canadian art. However dissatisfied one may be with their tenets and their work, there is no denying that the Group of Seven completely changed the course of our local art, and infused it with a vitality which the "rebels" of 1907 sought in vain to discover.

Before embarking on our survey it would be as well to sketch in the background as it existed about 1880. Up to the formation of the Ontario Society of Artists in 1872 and the Royal Canadian Academy in 1880, there existed no permanent institutions around which artistic talent might crystallize; nor, in truth, was there much artistic talent. Kane and Krieghoff were dead, and while there existed such honest practitioners as Jacobi, O'Brien, and Creswell, talent in general was at a low ebb. The completion of the C.P.R. and the success of other commercial ventures had not yet taken place, with the result that there was no wealthy class to aid aspiring painters, even had the desire been present. And by a curious piece of snobbery, analogous to the refusal to see anything good in Canadian art, the fine carving, domestic handicrafts, architecture, and the like existing in the Province of Quebec, was regarded—as one of our leading critics still professes to regard the work of the Skeena Indians—as "grotesque in design and crude in execution."[1]

But concurrently with the establishment of the Society and the Academy there arose a group of young men whose work, if unequal in value, had a considerable effect in quickening the sluggish progress of Canadian art. The most important of these men were: William Brymner (1855-1925); William Cruikshank (1849-1922); John Fraser (1838-1898); Robert Gagen (1848-1926); Henri

[1]Newton McTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, Toronto, 1925, chap. i.

Julien (1851-1908); C. M. Manly (1855-1924); and Homer Watson (1855-1936). Later, there also appeared Maurice Cullen (1866-1934), J. W. Morrice (1865-1924), and Horatio Walker. Meanwhile, through the development of the country, wealthy families were rising in Montreal, and with their appearance came the need for culture as a badge of social distinction. This formative period, as revealed through contemporary documents, was probably productive of as much bad taste as was ever concentrated in so short a period among so small a population. But that this was so should not provoke us to sneers, for we are witnesses to the pre-natal stirrings of what was later to become a vital living organism. Viewed through a microscope its gyrations appear somewhat ridiculous; but if there be any tragedy it is to be found in the monstrous *gaffes* which, with the lesson of history behind us, and with a live, if sometimes directionless and unruly native art present among us, still occur to-day. If history repeats itself, it is but a witness to human limitations—to the way in which the same pomposities and chicaneries, as well as the beautiful and significant acts, occur again and again.

Montreal in the eighties was regarded as the cultural centre of Canada. But it was merely an oversea appendage of Victorian middle-class industrialism, and we look in vain among the catalogues of the Art Association of Montreal (founded in 1860), or among the collections of the wealthy—Sir William Van Horne always excepted—for signs of taste or discrimination, or of encouragement for the younger painters. In Europe, Renoir, Cézanne, Pissarro, and Monet were at work, but if the Parisian *bourgeois* was unable to see their worth, how could Montreal be expected to do so?

Selecting a catalogue at random,[2] one finds that the 1881 exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal, held at the galleries of the Association in Philip Square, contained, among other things, the Gibb Collection, recently bequeathed to the city. This consisted mainly of work by the nineteenth-century Dutch School—painters of sentimental *genre* pieces, church interiors, competent but uninspired landscapes, and flashy still-lifes. Names which even in 1880 were but pale echoes, sound to-day like some grotesque invention, so completely are they forgotten: Weiser, Crabeels, Vanseverdonck, Koekkoek, Verboeckhoven, Verwee, Verschaar, Grips, Tschaggeny. The contemporaries of these nonentities, it is interesting to record, were Manet, Daumier, Degas, and others; their compatriot, Van Gogh. But if for Crabeels, Koekkoek, and Grips are substituted Bosboom, Israels, and Weissenbruch, what average collection bequeathed to the city of Montreal to-day would be very different?

This same exhibition also featured copies (then much in vogue) of Andrea del Sarto, Salvator Rosa, and others; some sculpture "from the antique," presented, appropriately enough, by the National Historical Society. Of contemporary sculpture there were "The Song of the Shirt" and a "Bust of Hebe." There was also a loan collection which actually included one Millet and one Daumier ("The Critics"), and a few Canadian works by the more conservative of the younger painters, including Harris, Verner, Edson, and Eaton.

The aesthetic taste of people of substance has remained much the same from that day to this, and Montreal has long been a paradise for the shrewd dealer. More amusing, however, because it is so much more serious, is the

[2]Bound volume of the Canadian Art Club, 1907-1915, Toronto Public Library. Except where otherwise stated, all my quotations are drawn from this collection.

brochure which accompanies the 1893 showing of the *Société des Arts*, held on February 27 of that year. I do not know whether this was the Society's first exhibition or not. Presumably it was, for in the catalogue, the aims and objects are set forth in the style of a manifesto. Money had come to Montreal, and in its train the desire for aesthetic patronage. One of the results was the formation of the *Société des Arts*. It was a limited company, with a capital stock of $100,000, and offices at 1666-8 Notre Dame Street. Its president was M. Louis Fréchette, its secretary M. Gustave Lamotte, its director M. L. A. A. Brault, and the equivocal office of censor and delegate—for the Montreal of the nineties must not be offended—was occupied by M. A. A. Trottier.

It is easy to laugh at the ponderous dignity and pretentiousness that marked this exhibition of third-rate products of the Paris *salons*—easy to smile at the parochial self-consciousness which sought to give the tawdry glamour of Empire furniture to this sorry crew of nonentities. But in doing so one might fail to listen to the ominous echoes ringing down the corridors of time, which attest to a contemporary point of view not so vastly different from that of forty years ago. Have not some of these comments a familiar ring?

ALBERTI. (Pseudonym de Wills) Peintre fort connu.

DELORME. M. Delorme, comme le fameux peintre Henri Regnault, peint de la main gauche.

EATON. C'est un bon paysagiste, et ses petites esquisses, connues sous le nom de "Eaton's Gems," trouvent une vente très facile.

GODBOIS. Sans compter un nombre incalculable de décorations et de portraits divers, il a apposé sa signature à des tableaux de premier ordre, dont plusieurs de sa composition.

HARO. Universellement connu.

PEZART. [The English translation:] In vain, without a teacher, but indefatigable, he toiled in the presence of nature. After each

study . . . he would exclaim: "It's not the thing." In vain did he try to give life; it was not the thing. The longer the struggle . . . the greater . . . the reward; Mr. Pezart now says, "I believe it's the thing." Like me, you will repeat it . . . when you see his herd of animals—they walk, they breathe, they live.

ROCHEGROSSE. Comme déssinateur, il peut avoir des rivaux, mais il n'a pas de supérieurs.

VAN DER ELLEN. Demeurant à Paris depuis un grand nombre d'années.

[Finally a magnificent bouquet for M. Edmund Dyonnet, now secretary of the Royal Canadian Academy:]

DYONNET. Un véritable artiste, mais encore un jeune homme charmant, sympathique, courtois, distingué, evidémment un fils de bonne maison.

What more could one ask, except some faint indication, apart from the information that an artist paints with his left hand, or lives in Paris, as to what value his work has? It is of little account that at this time Renoir, Monet, Cézanne, and the rest were at the height of their powers, when to-day a belated interest in the Impressionists still renders most moneyed collectors blind to the virtues of contemporary art.

But it is more important, and more interesting, to notice the curious dissipation of forces when "rebels" determined to break away from the stifling atmosphere of contemporary taste, and founded the Canadian Art Club in Toronto in 1907. Everywhere a spirit of change was in the air. There was a growing dissatisfaction with the stuffy prejudice against things Canadian—though this prejudice might have been justified in a cultured people with a long art tradition, here it was intolerable—with the importation of poor European work, with the general lack of interest in furthering the visual arts as a creative force in the community, and the consequent lack of funds and accommodation. Though there was the alluring prospect of the Toronto Art Museum ahead in April, 1906, the

*Canadian Architect and Builder* wisely took this occasion to preach a sermon on the lack of public interest, the lack of co-operation among the artists, and decided that "the conviction is growing that we have no method."[3] It was in this atmosphere that the Canadian Art Club was founded. Its subsequent history is an interesting example of how the strength of a rebel movement can be completely dissipated through a misunderstanding of the root causes of the malaise against which it struggles. The difference between the failure of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Canadian Art Club is one of degree only. The Club was founded in 1907, incorporated in 1909. Its first executive and members were: President, Homer Watson; Honorary President, D. R. Wilkie; Members, W. E. Atkinson, Archibald Browne, Franklin Brownell, J. W. Morrice, Edmund Morris, Horatio Walker, Curtis Williamson, and later, William Brymner, Maurice Cullen, Clarence Gagnon, Walter Allward, and Phimister Proctor.

The first thing that strikes one about these men is that most of them are middle-aged—rather late in life to be the torch-bearers of a new revolution. The first exhibition was held in 1908. Opening it, Wilkie remarked: "We aim to produce something Canadian in spirit . . . strong and vital and living, like our North-West land; not what is cheap and popular." He stressed the fact that members had come out from an older association "not to disrupt it nor . . . to injure it in any way; but only to cultivate and develop our special aim." Artists returning from abroad, he went on to say, "experienced a shock in realizing the lack of sympathy with their aims and objects, the lack of artistic facilities of any kind, the lack of intelligent critics, the lack of a suitable building where works of art can be properly shown, and, above all, the lack of any apparent

[3]Issue of April, 1906.

desire on the part of their compatriots to see things change for the better." These are pointed and accurate observations. Later, E. F. B. Johnston, K.C., in reviewing the first exhibition, threw out some salutary remarks: "Petty jealousies grow quickly; the desire to advertise and sell becomes paramount; favoritism is too often the order of the day; good sharp criticism must be given and taken in the true spirit." Strong words these, and much needed. But in reading Johnston's later remarks in an article written for the London *Studio*, one doubts whether he has hold of the right end of the stick. While some years ago, he remarks, there was no feeling for art amongst the public, yet now one can see everywhere "magnificent paintings by Israels, Mauve, the Maris brothers, and Weissenbruch." Was this the stake, one wonders, for which the Club gambled so heavily? Again, Professor Mavor, in reviewing an exhibition by the Club, while conceding "an undeniable note of sincerity," suggests that Gagnon "lacks distinction." Now of all the painter members of the Club, apart from Morrice who is in a class by himself, Gagnon, Cullen, and Watson were at that date making the heaviest contribution to the development of Canadian art.

It is apparent that though its aim was laudable, the Club was pursuing the wrong course with extreme exactness—a contention which its early disbanding seems to support. The resounding clarion-call turned out finally to be only a shrill piping. The organization was hesitant to plunge, quick to retract its heresies as time went on. In 1915, if my information is correct, the Club was dissolved. Aesthetically it had misfired. It had sought to remedy public apathy and artistic bankruptcy with palliatives rather than with radical excisions. It had mistaken its mild revolt against officialdom for an invitation to liberty. It had erroneously identified the defection of a mildly dis-

satisfied group with the infusing of a new vitality into Canadian art. As the Lancastrian experiment of government was to the parliamentary system, so was the Canadian Art Club to the new direction given to Canadian art by the Group of Seven, when they recognized that a new environment must be interpreted in a new way. It was a noble effort which failed less because it was before its time than because, with a few exceptions, it still lay under the hand of the Dutch and Barbizon Schools, and the official mannerisms of the Royal Canadian Academy and its spiritual parent, the Royal Academy.

Even to-day, the dead hand of tradition—dead, because we make it so, by too implicit reliance—lies heavily upon us; and the work of the Group of Seven, as is always the case, has been stereotyped by its followers. Tradition should be the great touchstone to which experience is referred; to make it more than that is to enslave oneself. The history of art is one of continual flux—of the continual adaptation of new ideas to the main stream, ceaselessly flowing. Only thus can a great Canadian art be developed beyond the embryonic stage.

# THE VALUE OF COLONIES

W. Russell Maxwell

It is an interesting fact that those who believe in the value of colonies are, on the whole, those who haven't got them, and those who profess not to believe in their value nevertheless possess them. The arguments on both sides commonly contradict not only each other but themselves, while the assumptions involved, and the conclusions reached, contradict established fact, past experience, and present practice. In short, the whole matter is in an even more chaotic state than most human affairs. The following is an attempt to introduce some semblance of order into one corner of the subject. It is concerned with general principles and not with statistics, though without statistics no conclusions as to the *amount* of value can be reached. Some discussion of the development of opinion on the subject is included, while a few references to authors, ancient and modern, are introduced to give the necessary air of literary culture and erudition to the whole.

From the days of the Greeks down to the present, three principal advantages have been attributed to the possession of colonies. Allowing a fairly broad interpretation to the words, they may be called (1) military advantage, (2) the advantage of relief from the pressure of population, (3) trade advantage. The military advantage has sometimes consisted of more convenient and secure defence of the home territory. Thus we are told by Thucydides, with reference to the establishment of the colony of Aegina, that "during the summer the Athenians also expelled the Aeginetans with their wives and children from Aegina, on the ground of their having

been the chief agents in bringing the war upon them. Besides, Aegina lies so near Peloponnese, that it seemed safer to send colonists of their own to hold it, and shortly afterwards the settlers were sent out."[1] Modern parallels to this action are perhaps not very common, but it is fundamentally the same thing as the efforts of states in modern times to extend their boundaries until they reach strategic frontiers.

More often, however, colonies were established for the defence of trade routes. They have been useful from this standpoint in two ways: first, as a haven of refuge for merchant ships, a factor of more importance in the days of small and less seaworthy ships than now; and secondly, as a base for war-ships. Modern examples are are not lacking. Compare the words of Commodore Perry:

> When we look at the possessions in the East of our great maritime rival, England, and the constant and rapid increase of their fortified ports, we should be admonished of the necessity of prompt measures on our part. . . . Fortunately the Japanese and many other islands of the Pacific are still left untouched by this unconscionable government; and some of them lie in a route of great commerce which is destined to become of great importance to the United States. No time should be lost adopting active measures to secure a sufficient number of ports of refuge.[2]

A third sort of military value sometimes derived from colonies consists of a supply of soldiers for the army. This was of some importance in Roman times. The use of mercenaries is a long-established device for increasing military strength, and while they have sometimes been available from foreign countries, colonies also have often supplied them. This is still a consideration of some importance. Both the British and the French empires make use of native troops whose motives for enlisting,

[1]Thucydides, II, 27.

[2]Quoted, Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, I, p. 723.

where it is a matter of free choice, are economic rather than patriotic. In the British Dominions, too, although there is nearly complete political independence, and the beginnings of an independent national spirit, the mother country seeks to retain the loyalty of the people by strengthening the economic ties with herself, even at some cost in terms of economic value. This is a further refinement of the practice of purchasing mercenaries.

The value of colonies as outlets for surplus population was also important in Greek times. It has not always been considered an advantage, however. Many Mercantilist writers regarded the people of a country as part of its wealth, and even went so far as to set a definite monetary value on them![3] These writers naturally considered emigration to be in itself a loss, and only justified by some special gain, such as the regulation of the colonial trade in the interests of the mother country.[4] The Mercantilists, indeed, were more concerned about the dangers of under-population than of over-population. In modern times, however, under the influence of Malthus and his followers, the fear of over-population has been very evident, and the subject has been much discussed—though often without any clear definition of its meaning. Since there is no fixed limit to the number of people a country can support, over-population can only exist by comparison with another country or with some criterion of optimum population. It is noteworthy that some of the countries which complain of over-population, and base on it a claim for colonies, adopt the policy of encouraging the growth of population.

A study of the statistics of colonial population throws much light on the question of the value of colonies as

[3] *E.g.*, Sir William Petty, *Verbum Sapienti*, chap. ii.
[4] This was the opinion of Josiah Child.

outlets for population. No such study can be attempted here; but it may be said that the number of people from the home countries actually settled in the various colonial possessions is, generally speaking, not very impressive. Obviously much depends on the climatic suitability of the colony for white settlement. But apart from that, there are other reasons why colonies afford only small relief—at least directly—from the difficulties denoted by the word over-population. Economic and social conditions in the colonies are likely to be widely different from those in the home land, so that settlement there will appeal to only a few, and only a few will succeed. This is especially true during the early life of the colony (which may be long), before the similitude of the environment of the home land has been reproduced. Nor will the difficulty be eliminated by the government's undertaking the work of colonization, as is now being done in some authoritarian states. A certain advantage may be derived from the opening up of careers for young men of the home country in the administrative service of the colonies. The number directly benefited cannot be large (viewed relatively to the population of the home country); but since they are likely to come from families of the ruling class, the benefit may exert an influence out of proportion to the numbers involved. The most important relief from population pressure, however, is probably to be found in the expansion of home production made possible by the development of a colonial market. This brings us to the trade advantage to be derived from colonies.

One of the earliest forms of this advantage to be appreciated, if indeed it can be called a trade advantage at all, was tribute. It has now been generally abandoned as too crude a form of exploitation. If we except such cases as that of an army quartered in the colony at its

expense, or contributions to imperial defence—which, indeed, have sometimes been voluntary and therefore not tribute, there are scarcely any cases of direct tribute to-day. Its place has been taken by a subtler form of exploitation, the regulation of colonial trade in the interest of the home country. This is a common practice.

Adam Smith points out that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when interest in colonies revived on a large scale, after having lain dormant since the days of Greece and Rome, and when European adventurers were laying the foundations of the present colonial empires, their main interest was in gold and silver. "For some time after the discovery of America, the first inquiry of the Spaniards, when they arrived upon any unknown coast, used to be, if there was any gold or silver to be found in the neighbourhood. By the information which they received, they judged whether it was worth while to make a settlement there. . . ."[5] A little later it was exotic products, spices and silks, which commanded their attention, because these were very cheap in the countries of their origin, compared with what they were in Europe. Trade in them was, therefore, a means of obtaining gold and silver, even if gold and silver had to be given in exchange for them, and it was so represented by Mercantilist writers and traders who wanted to defend the "carrying of gold and silver forth of the kingdom." What they really wanted, of course, was the profits of the trade, and their argument is significant merely as showing what the advantage of the trade, or the possession of the territories, was thought to be.

Later, a broader view was taken, and it was felt that any profitable trade brought some advantage to the nation. This is, perhaps, now considered the principal

[5] *Wealth of Nations* (Everyman ed.), I, p. 376.

advantage derived from the possession of colonies, and therefore deserves somewhat fuller consideration. A distinction may be drawn, at the outset, between a colony which is largely uninhabited, or "virgin territory," and one which is well settled and has an established organization, though backward in the economic technique in which western civilization excels. The amount of advantage to be gained from the exploitation of the first sort of region naturally depends a good deal on the extent of its resources. But except in rare cases where valuable natural resources are easily accessible, the returns, even if ultimately large, may be expected to be slow. The region may, it is true, commence almost at once to absorb large amounts of capital from the home state. There will be roads and railways to be built, and many other things. This, however, is expenditure and not income. It gives employment, as people are fond of saying, but that could be done by expenditure in the field of domestic enterprise. The question is one of returns, and involves a choice between those that could be obtained from purely domestic enterprise, such as improvement in housing, and those that can be obtained from colonial development. It may be that, from the social standpoint, the return from domestic investment would be the larger, as would probably be the case, for example, if the domestic standards of housing, education, or public health were low. But the types of domestic investment required may not be those that are profitable in the capitalistic sense. Indeed, they may be deemed to weaken the foundations of capitalism by encouraging aspirations to luxury, and awkward questionings, in the minds of the lower classes, and by discouraging thrift. In short, they may be regarded as socialistic. Thus colonial enterprise, while not the most advantageous to the community, may be the

most advantageous to the capitalist class. The fact is not without significance, that two European countries which are pressing their claims for colonies are Fascist states, while a third country is ruled by the forces of conservatism, not to say reaction.[6]

The case of the other sort of region is somewhat different. There it is only necessary to introduce the technical methods familiar in the home country, and perhaps establish a stable government, to develop a large and lucrative trade. The returns from this sort of "colony" are both quicker and surer. Even here, however, there is a danger. If the goodwill of the native

[6]On the other hand, the argument of some Socialists that colonial trade is of benefit only to the capitalist class, or even to a few capitalists, because only a few people engage in it, or are affected by it, seems to me not well founded. It sometimes commits the error referred to by J. S. Mill, of "fastening attention on the fortunes acquired by particular merchants" in considering the benefits of foreign trade. The fortune can be acquired, however, only by exchanging goods and services of the home land for those of the colony, in some way or other, and so whatever benefits there are become distributed in large part among people who are not members of the capitalist or entrepreneur classes. Thus, the advantage, whatever it may be, of a colonial empire to the shipping industry is not confined to the shipowners, but is distributed to seamen, shipbuilders, and so to innumerable others. In a similar way the benefits derived by a particular industry from a protective duty are not confined to the investors in the industry, or the entrepreneurs, but are shared, such as they are, among all who derive their incomes from the industry. Even if we consider a mere transfer of capital to a colony, such as investment in a rubber plantation, the capital could be transferred, in the end, only by selling something whose production would involve the distribution of income to others than capitalists.

The point made above rests upon the fact that a good many fields of investment, in the social sense of the word, including some of the most important, are, even in a capitalist economy, excluded from exploitation by private capital. If those fields are relatively under-exploited from the social standpoint, the investment which is most profitable in the capitalistic sense will not be the most profitable socially. In the language of Professor Pigou, the marginal private net product will not equal the marginal social net product, and, on our particular assumptions, waste results. This waste could be avoided only by a government policy which would absorb into home investment of the necessary sorts some of the capital which would otherwise go for colonial exploitation. This is, indeed, a sort of "socialistic" ground for regarding imperialism as the last refuge of a wasteful capitalism, but it is a different ground from the other.

population is lost, they may resort to the use of the boycott. It is this danger, no doubt, which is delaying the Japanese conquest of North China, and which has induced the British government to grant a measure of self-government to India.

The value of colonies as sources of trade is sometimes disputed on the ground that countries which possess colonies carry on only a small proportion of their total trade with them. Several objections may be made to this proposition. First, the question of the existence of an advantage must not be confused with that of its amount. If a country which possesses colonies enjoys advantages in trading with them, which other countries do not enjoy, those advantages are of value to her whether the amount be large or small. Facts regarding the proportion of the colonial to total trade may show that certain countries *exaggerate* the value of colonial possessions, but cannot show that it does not *exist*. The second objection is that in some important instances the amount of the colonial trade, and its proportion to the total trade of the country, can scarcely be described as small. The proportion amounted in the case of France, in 1934, to over 27 per cent., and in the case of Great Britain, in the same year, to over 39 per cent., counting Dominion and colonial trade together.[7] The most important objection, however, to the argument is that it obscures the real point, which is that an empire furnishes an area of "preferential" trade, in which the trade barriers are lower than elsewhere and, even if rising, are rising more slowly. During periods when the burdens on international trade are increasing, the countries with colonial possessions, there-

[7]The inclusion of the Dominion as well as the colonial trade is justified, and indeed necessary, because the Dominions are, in fact, areas of preferential trade, as well as the colonies, though the political basis of the preference is different.

fore, suffer less heavily than others. This fact is reflected in an increase in the proportion which colonial trade bears to the total trade of the colonial powers. In 1913 colonial trade comprised 11.06 per cent. of the total trade of France, and 28.53 per cent. of Great Britain's. In 1934 the figures had become 27.68 per cent. and 39.68 per cent. respectively. These figures reflect the growing difficulty of carrying on genuinely foreign trade, and indicate the relatively heavier burden imposed by the growth of trade barriers, upon countries without colonies.[8]

All this presupposes that the home government could not have secured equal advantages in the colonial territory without political control. This assumption is nearly always justified. Even if there is no discrimination in tariffs, the country possessing political control is almost sure to enjoy some advantages over others in exploiting the wealth of the colony. Nearly every colonial enterprise is likely to require the co-operation of the colonial administration in some way or other, and this will naturally be more whole-hearted between fellow-countrymen. But, as a matter of fact, advantages of this sort are usually supplemented by advantages in the form of discriminatory duties. These may be either (*a*) on exports or (*b*) on imports; and they may be imposed either by assimilating the colonial tariff to that of the home country, which means establishing free trade between the colony and the home land and taxing all other trade, or by a policy of preference, in which case both the colony and the home land tax each other's products, but at lower rates than other products. Export taxes are not

[8]The point that colonial possessions are of little value because only in rare instances do colonies possess monopolies of important commodities, is even less substantial, since it is not necessary to have a monopoly of an article in order to derive an advantage from trading in it. Where monopoly exists the advantage of preferential trade is, of course, even greater.

so common as taxes on imports, and preference on them is not so common as is the other sort. Where it exists, however, it obviously allows the mother country to buy the colonial product cheaper than other countries can do. If the preference is on imports into the colony, the advantage to the mother country may be stated either in terms of a larger market for its products or in terms of greater ease in securing foreign products. It may be worth pointing out that, in the absence of special regulations governing the use that may be made of foreign exchange arising from exports to a particular country,[9] a particular currency can be converted into any other by a transaction in the foreign exchange market. Therefore anything which makes it easier to obtain one currency, a colonial currency for example, makes it easier to obtain *all* others and therefore all foreign products, not merely those of the colony.

There has been a good deal of discussion in recent years, especially in Germany, about the value of a colonial empire as a relief from foreign exchange difficulties. It is a cruel mockery, the Germans say in effect, to tell us that we can obtain foreign and colonial produce on the same terms as other people when we cannot obtain the foreign exchange with which to pay for it. This, however, is merely another way of looking at the same problem. It involves looking at it in terms of the mechanism of payment instead of in terms of the movement of commodities. Payment is made easier to the extent that the sale of goods and services abroad is made easier. The point can be illustrated by a well-defined example. Let us suppose, to take the strongest case, that a country acquires a new colony, and that it assimilates it in the economic sense. That is to say, it makes

[9]Such special regulations are, of course, becoming more common.

the colonial tariff uniform with its own and replaces the colonial currency by its own. Let us further suppose that the exchange of colonial for home currency takes place on terms that are not disadvantageous to the colonials, that is to say at the rate established in the foreign exchange market before the assimilation. And lastly, let us suppose that the principle laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations, that mandated territories should be administered in the interests of their inhabitants, is lived up to, so that the colony is not exploited in any way. If, now, the home country takes a larger value of colonial produce than before, it will pay for it, in the first instance, by turning over to colonials money balances in its own banks. But this does not constitute payment in any except a nominal sense. Real payment will be secured by the colony only to the extent that these balances are turned into goods and services. If they are turned into the goods and services of the home country, there results an expansion of home-country exports to the colony. If they are turned into foreign currency, and thus into foreign goods and services, the home country must export more than it did before, to supply the necessary foreign exchange. If neither course is followed, and colonial balances simply accumulate in the home country, the effect is that of a forced loan to the home country by the colony. In all probability the first course would be the one followed, since the application of the home country's tariff to the colony would probably induce it to take a larger value of its imports from that source than before. Since, however, there is nothing in the mere fact of an increase in the colony's exports to the home country to induce it to take a larger value of its imports from there, and since it was accustomed, before the change in control, to take them from

elsewhere, any diversion of colonial purchasing to the home country by means of import tariffs or exchange restrictions constitutes exploitation of the colony in the sense of obliging it to do something different from what it chose to do when it was free to choose, and from what, presumably, it preferred. Strictly speaking, it would constitute, therefore, a violation of the principle laid down in the Covenant, but this would not be taken seriously. Only in the case where the increase in colonial exports to the home country constituted an increase in the total of colonial exports could such exploitation be justified on the grounds of *quid pro quo*.

The point is that there is no magic in the acquisition of colonies, taken by itself, that eases foreign-exchange difficulties, even if the colony is assimilated. Domestic trade as well as foreign trade is an exchange of goods and services, and purchases are made easier only to the extent that sales are. The advantages of colonies in this respect can accordingly be discussed, and to some extent measured, in terms of the expansion of markets or in terms of the relief of foreign-exchange difficulties. But these are not separate advantages: they are one and the same. Moreover, it is not a question of the expansion of colonial trade but of *total* trade. The point is elementary and would not be worth insisting on if it were not so often confused in current discussion.

We are thus led to confirm the view, frequently taken in British quarters, that the source of the colonial difficulty lies in the restriction of international trade, and its solution lies in freeing that trade. The advantage of a colonial empire is that it gives a larger area of freer trade. In a world in which tariff barriers are rising and the earth's surface is being increasingly linked in customs unions of one sort or another with particular countries,

the countries without colonies see themselves being slowly strangled. It is a significant fact that the great period of colonial expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries occurred when state policy was dominated in the economic sphere by the ideas of Mercantilism and restriction; that the competition for colonies declined during the years in the nineteenth century when more liberal ideas prevailed and trade was freer; and that it has revived in our day with the revival of restriction. There is logic in these events.

# ENGLISH IRONY BEFORE CHAUCER[1]

EARLE BIRNEY

WE appear to be living in times whose economic urgencies require the blunt satire of invective or the perilous constructivism of revolt. Irony is as nearly out of fashion as it can ever be; Anatole France and Conrad disappear behind Gide and Dos Passos; Aldous Huxley leaves the goat-foot dance to march, without benefit of fife or drum, in the somewhat formless ranks of the fighting pacifists. One feels the need to apologize for being concerned with irony at all, and more especially with irony so far-away and long ago. But while Ottawa remains unbombed, we continue to read English literature, or literature about English literature. The excuse for the present essay lies in the fact that if we confine our studies to the second category, as too many wise men continue to do for the centuries on the far side of 1400, we shall have no knowledge whatever of a long tradition of English irony worthy of notice in itself, and doubly interesting because it may have helped to form the style of that most pervasive of all English ironists, Geoffrey Chaucer.

If, for example, we turn to the only monograph yet published on the history of English irony, Mr. F. McD. Turner's *The Element of Irony in English Literature* (1926), we find his chronicle beginning with Milton, and the statement that irony in English was "but faintly apparent" before the Commonwealth. Mr. J. A. K. Thomson, author of one of the few books of authority upon the

[1]For the reader's convenience I have modernized a number of my quotations. In two cases I have drawn from Shackford's *Legends and Satires from Medieval Literature*, 1913, and once from Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets*, 1913. Other notes refer the reader to the best printed text of the original.

form itself, *Irony: An Historical Introduction* (1926), is no kindlier to the middle ages. Irony, to him, is a marble goddess whom "Erasmus brought . . . from Greece. This is not a matter of opinion but of fact."

Readers of Chaucer, of course, know better, but none of them has yet thought it urgent to publish any extended study of that quality which all seem united in praising as the essence of Chaucer's genius. And into the reaches behind Chaucer not even the most wandering student of English irony seems to have strayed. It is still the custom to assume that his sly witticisms and his satiric adroitness were either mysteriously born within him near the close of the fourteenth century, or were achieved by his reaching back, perhaps with the help of Jean de Meun, across a waste of time to the forgotten subtleties of Horace and Ovid. The truth is rather that in the rich accumulation of political satires, beast stories, fabliaux, in the parodies of church literature, the burlesques of romance, the proverbs, and even in the older epics, romances, and chronicles, and the writings of the Church Fathers themselves, irony, in varying degrees but in nearly all the admired forms, has descended with little interruption from the golden days of Aristophanes and Lucian. This tradition came to Chaucer in at least four languages—French, Italian, Latin, and English—and of these *l'esprit gaulois* was undoubtedly the richest and the most influential. There is room within the scope of these pages, however, only for brief notice of some ironies in authentically English literature before Chaucer.

The word *irony* is itself so protean a *cliché* that I must begin with a warning that I shall use it as loosely as the dictionaries allow. "Indirect satire" may serve as a working definition and it is one which I should be prepared to defend for even the "irony of fate" and "dramatic

irony." A more discriminating analysis of ironic forms is now to be found in the excellent studies in dramatic irony recently published by Dr. G. G. Sedgewick of the University of British Columbia.[2] If, in the meantime, someone should push me to stand solemnly upon an independent definition, I should venture that, in all uses of the word to-day, there is this unity of meaning: an illusion has been created that a real incongruity or conflict is non-existent, and the illusion has been so shaped that a bystander may, immediately or ultimately, see through it and be thereby surprised into a more vivid awareness of that very conflict. One of Chaucer's contemporaries described the same thing more neatly as "wit graced with pointed wings."[3]

## I. Battle-Irony

The first use of the word was, as is well known, limited to Socratic understatement, *i.e.*, understatement with satiric or didactic intention. This is also the first form to appear in what survives to us of Anglo-Saxon literature. The exultations of victors are regularly couched in sardonic taunts. The *Beowulf* scop rejoices that the slain sea-monster "was slower in swimming in the ocean when death overtook him."[1] The same primitive jeering of the vanquished enemy swells in the epithets of Constantine at Brunanburh, and in the insults hurled against the Northmen at Maldon. "Massive" and "savage" to the French ear of M. Emile Legouis, it is nevertheless a form of irony which was to continue smouldering in English poetry, from Chaucer's epitaphs upon Nero and

[2] *Of Irony, Especially in Drama*, University of Toronto Press, 1935; see also his essay on "Dramatic Irony" (*University Magazine*, Montreal, XII, 1913, 116-34).

[3] "Contention of Phillis and Flora;" tr. Shackford.

[1] Lines 1435-6; *cf.* 2277.

Nebuchadnezzar, to the republican Shelley's sonnet upon Ozymandias, and the witticisms of Kipling's imperialist soldiers. English medieval narrative is seldom without it. Listen to the gloatings of Layamon and his hero upon the slaying of two invaders:

He smote him over the head so that he fell down,
And he put the sword into his mouth—such meat was new to him—
Until the point of the sword sank through into the earth.
Then said Uther: "Now, Pascent, lie there.
Now hast thou Brut-land [Britain] all clutched in thine hand.
Dwell here you shall, thou and thy friend Gillomar.
And enjoy well Brut-land for now I deliver it into your hand
So that you may dwell together with us here.
And ever have no fear of who shall feed you."[2]

The same elaborate battle-irony reaches even into the pious lives of saints, when an English chronicler tells them. The Devil visits St. Dunstan in his smithy-hermitage, and tempts him in the guise of a wanton. The fiend, seized suddenly in the nose by the hot tongs of the holy man, is utterly routed, for, says the poet,

. . . since the Saint he found at home, who blew his nose so sore,
Thither to cure him of his cold, he hied him never more.[3]

In the *Purgatory of St. Patrick* it is the fiends who "gleek" at the good man. They lead Sir Owain to hell's pit and jocularly invite him to descend and "find solace" with the other "birds in our cage." For "this is our court and our castle tower."[4]

Beneath Minot's varnish of Norman sprightliness there is the same ponderous and pitiless jeering, as of David the Bruce, who marched doughtily against the English at Neville's Cross but got "the faire tower of

[2]Tr. from *Brut* ed. Madden, II, pp. 334-5 (MS. Cott. Calig. A. ix).
[3]Tr. Weston, p. 39, lines 91-2.
[4]Tr. Shackford.

London for reward."[5] With the same old epic fierceness the hero-worshipping Barbour crows over the English warriors whom David's father had vanquished. The most playful and perhaps the most consistent of all these gladiatorial ironists is the author of the *Tale of Gamelyn*. He does not merely tell us that his hero cudgels clerics; he says that Gamelyn made a new order of monks and friars by the laying on of hands. Gamelyn's comrade Adam counsels him to do no harm to the clerics, scratch not their holy tonsures—"but break both their legs and then their arms." Gamelyn shares this storm-trooper humour; when he vanquished the wrestling champion

> And kaste him on the lefte syde that thre ribbes tobrak [broke],
> And therto his oon arm that yaf [gave] a gret crak
> Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertely anoon,
> 'Schal it be holde for a cast [throw] or elles for noon [none]?'[6]

This tradition of literary sadism explains those elaborations of the Christ-tauntings which appear in the mystery plays, and which Chaucer himself may have heard bellowed from a pageant-wagon. In the York Tile-makers' Play, when Jesus faints under scourging, one of the soldiers complains: "Despite our care, this dastard dozes."[7] A mere crowning with thorns is not enough; the single mocking "Hail, King of the Jews" recorded by the Evangelists must be almost lovingly improvised upon:

> FIRST SOLDIER: Hail! comely King, who no kingdom hast known.
> Hail! undoughty duke. . . .
>
> FOURTH SOLDIER: Hail! strong one, who may scarcely stand up
> To fight.
> Whee! rascal, heave up thine hand
> And thank us all who are worshipping thee. . . .[8]

[5] *Poems*, ed. Hall, 1887, no. 9, lines 35-40.
[6] Ed. Skeat, lines 521-33, 245-8; *cf.* 135-6.
[7] Tr. from *York Plays*, ed. Lucy Smith, no. 33, line 365.
[8] *Ibid.*, lines 409-20 (modernized).

## II. Proverb-Irony

The riddles and the rare proverbs of the Anglo-Saxon, in their concealments and involutions, and their racy realism, contain the germs of ironic wit, but little more than the germs. There was a certain pedantic coldness about the Anglo-Saxon folksay which needed to be clarified by Latin incisiveness and warmed by French gaiety. When that had happened, laconic rusticity became a guise for that barbed posing and punning which has been preserved to us in such collections as the *Demaundes Joyous*, or "Merry Questions:"

> Demaunde: Why dryve men dogges out of the chyrche?
> Response: Bycause they come not up and offre.[1]

Much of what seems to be very "personal" humour in Chaucer is spun out of just such homely village aphorism, which had become by this time definitely integrated with English literature. "The cock is brave on his own dunghill," puts us in Pandarus' world—but it occurs in the pious *Ancren Riwle*.[2] These proverbs, from Alfred and Hendyng and Alanus de Insulis to Chaucer and Gower, and George Eliot's Mrs. Poyser, consistently reflect the ironic view of life. They are a distillation of the sour jokes fate plays on man, comments upon the capricious contradictions of life which were ready formed for Chaucer. "A beguiler shall himself beguilëd be" appears not only in his contemporaries, Langland and Gower, but harks back through the *Roman de la Rose* and Dionysius Cato to the *Psalms* and the dim East.[3] There is a similar history for the phrasing of some of Chaucer's most "Chaucerian" broodings upon chance or the inconsis-

[1] *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. Thomas Wright, II, p. 73.

[2] "Thet coc is kene on his owune mixenne;" ed. Morton, p. 140.

[3] *Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robinson, I, 4321. *Cf. Troilus*, I, 740-1, IV, 1585; and Skeat's *Early English Proverbs*, nos. 237, 153.

tencies of men. He had but to bend an ear to the common speech of his day to learn the trick of casting sophisticated meditations in memorable form. When Troilus said

> Nettle in, dok out, now this, now that . . .[4]

he was using the words of an ancient charm which accompanied the application of dock-leaves.

## III. Irony of Fate

Many proverbs evoked that deeper irony which views life as a show "that passeth sone as floures faire."[1] This was more than an attitude cultivated by monks for the disprizing of the fleshly world. Some medieval Englishmen were still pagan enough to suggest that even what was done "for God's love" drew no reward.[2] Life was topsy-turvy and the sooner one faced it the better. Chaucer's contemporaries brought Fortune's wheel into the lullabies:

> Lollai, lollai, little child!
> The foot is in the wheel.
> Thou knowest not if it will turn
> To woe or weal.[3]

Such lugubrious pessimism, given narrative form, supplies the typical medieval "irony of fate," that extension of dramatic irony to the theatre of life, where all the actors walk trustingly to unexpected and often undeserved catastrophes, and where the gods are the subtle and sardonic deceivers.

[4] *Troilus*, IV, 461; see *Notes and Queries*, ser. 1, III, p. 368.

[1] *Troilus*, V, 1840-1; *cf.* Skeat, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

[2] See the fragment "Al it is fantam . . . ." prtd. in *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, p. 20.

[3] Modernized from the fourteenth-century Anglo-Irish poem in F. E. Budd, *A Book of Lullabies*, no. 1, p. 27.

There is little of it in the *Beowulf*, for though Wyrd is Fate, it is a Fate which tends to side with the hero and even to be susceptible to his influence. Philosophic irony, when it does appear, is generally limited to moral comments upon the pursuit of riches. The scop is at pains to contrast the sordid end of the Bad King who assembled much wealth and hoarded it, with the golden sunset of his successor, the Good King, who promptly began to disburse the treasure—presumably being careful to include the poet among the beneficiaries. A deeper irony lies in the symbolism of the epic's ending; the gold which Beowulf lost his life to obtain is burned on his pyre: "There *it* still lives, ancient, useless as it was before."[4] The Norman hero of the epoch's close receives the same brooding epitaph: "He who was formerly a mighty king and lord of much land had now of all his land but seven foot space; and he who was whilom clothed with gold and with gems, now lay over-wrought with mold."[5]

This savouring of the tragic ironies which dwell in all human action becomes curiously blended with the old battle-irony. The unknown Englishman who celebrated the Flemish burghers when, in 1301, they cut to pieces the knightly forces of Philip the Fair, begins sardonically enough:

> Lustneth, lordinges, bothe yonge ant olde,
> Of the Freynssh-men that were so proude ant bolde,
> Hou the Flemmyssh-men bohten hem ant solde,
> Upon a Wednesday.

But the consciousness of human woe has crept in before the first stanza is ended:

[4]Lines 3167-8.
[5]Tr. from *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Bodl. Laud 636), ed. Thorpe, I, p. 354.

Betere hem were at home in huere [their] londe
Then for to seche Flemmyssh by the see stronde,
Wherethourh moni Frenshe wyf wryngeth hire honde,
Ant singeth, weylaway.[6]

There is no pity here, perhaps, but there is humane realization of the ironies, exultation with a sigh. There is the same fusion of moods in the more familiar ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*:

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play were playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.[7]

We come closer here to the "classical" notion of the irony of fate as a visitation by the gods upon one who committed that indiscretion, that initial sin, which the Greeks called *hybris*, a conscious or unconscious emulation of the deities themselves, Agamemnon's treading of the purple. In English, as in other medieval literatures, *hybris* is simplified into the formula: Pride goeth before a fall. In the Chester cycle—whose extant version may antedate Chaucer—there is a play, the *Fall of Lucifer*, which dramatically exemplifies the formula. It is not enough for Lucifer to revolt. The playwright must seat him upon God's own throne—in the temporary absence of that potentate—and make him appeal to other angels for confirmation that he becomes it as well as his Maker. Significantly, too, the seraphs who fall with him are those who, at the opening of the play, were self-consciously exulting in their brightness and beauty, in plain contrast to the sedately mystical majority who ignored themselves in contemplation of the Godhead.

[6]Ritson's *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, I, p. 44, lines 1-8.

[7]Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Sargent and Kittredge, p. 104, no. A-8. The date of composition may be as early as the thirteenth century.

## IV. Dramatic Irony

If the irony of fate may be said to be dramatic irony magnified to the dimensions of the world's stage, it is equally true that dramatic irony is the irony of fate reduced to the microcosm of a single poem or play. Dramatic irony is to be taken for granted in most narrative literature, and though it is singularly absent in the *Beowulf* and in Old English literature generally, it provides the essential story interest in the sagas of Horn and of Havelok, in many incidents of the *Cursor Mundi*, in such "thrillers" as *Gawain and the Green Knight*, and in romances like *Sir Orfeo*; and it is the stuff out of which most of the finest and simplest ballads were woven.[1] Moreover, the fashioners of Chaucer's contemporary drama were often quite "modern" in their alertness to dramatic irony; they made, for example, a complete and strangely moving play out of the slight situation furnished in the *New Testament* when the risen Jesus talks unrecognized to travellers from Emmaus.[2]

At the other extreme of tone, but because of that much closer to the author of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, is the fable *Of the Fox and of the Wolf*, from the reign of Edward I. Like the villain of Chaucer's mock-epic, this fox uses ambiguities to deceive Chanticleer, though here with less success. He tells the rooster, for example, that he has only "let thy hens' blood" as any good neighbour or physician would, and suggests that Chanticleer has the same sickness "under the spleen" and needs the same doctor.[3]

[1]Mrs. Dempster's scholarly, if limited, study of *Dramatic Irony in Chaucer* (Stanford University Press, 1932) has revealed some less familiar models which lay close to Chaucer's hand, in his own language as well as in the French.

[2]"The Sledman's Play" (*York Plays*, *op. cit.*, p. 426).

[3]*Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, p. 273.

It was in comedy that the dramatic ironist of medieval England felt most at home. His impress is upon that finest of English pre-Chaucerian fabliaux, *Dame Siriz, or the Weeping Bitch.* Of the brotherhood, too, is Chaucer's anonymous contemporary, the poet of the alliterative *Patience*, who accepts the Jonah story as a satiric fable upon a foolish sinner who tried to escape Jehovah, and develops its latent laughter in a manner sufficiently startling but not perhaps unfaithful to the original Hebraic conception. Jonah's relief when he has secured passage on the boat (by which he intends to elude God) is carefully played upon. "Was never so joyful a Jew as Jonas was then;" but "Lo!" says the poet, smacking the irony, "the witless wretch—because he would not suffer, now has he put himself in peril all the more." The storm's fury increases. All assemble for the lot-drawing, all except the banal "Jonas the Jew who had joked in secret. He had flown, for fear . . . down to the boat's bottom, and clung to a plank."[4] But even there he does not escape the Lord and His Whale.

The same mixture of clowning realism and gay sarcasm sharpens the well-known combats between the Chester Noah and his music-hall wife. Another source less quoted by historians of comedy—the ballad—provides similar humours. A peculiar "practical-joke irony" permeates such stories as the *Gay Goshawk*,[5] and gives memorable form to the deceptions practised by priests and wives upon husbands or upon each other; it is an irony often underlined by *contrasti* or satirical wit combats, the medieval comic equivalent of the Greek *sticho-*

[4]Modernized from *Early English Alliterative Poems*, ed. R. Morris, p. 89; lines 109-14, 182 *ff.*

[5]See Winnifred Smith, "Elements of Comedy in English and Scottish Ballads" (*Vassar Medieval Studies*, 1923, pp. 104-7).

*mythia*.[6] Practical-joke irony is one of the breezy charms of Robin Hood himself, that discreeter English Paul Bunyan; when the Great Outlaw captures the Sheriff of Nottingham he entertains him at a banquet furnished under the greenwood with vessels stolen from the sheriff's own table.

## V. Irony of the Under-Dog

A great measure of the artistic satisfaction supplied by such ballads, particularly in their own times, lay in a wish-fulfilment, the imagined or actual triumph of the exploited over the traditional exploiter. In the "political ballad" this irony of the under-dog becomes the essence of the form. The pages of Thomas Wright's collections are charged with the bitterness of peasant and struggling burgher and all those not yet strong enough to strike openly. Nor is such satire confined to the stray ballad. For example, in the midst of a symbolic representation of the awful Day of Doom, the Towneley play *Juditium*, suddenly appears a page of low comedy, a lampoon of the upper classes. If monks and even friars were lumped with knights and barons it was for the reason that churchmen were also now land-owners and tax-gatherers. "Holy chireche is vnder fote" is the doleful title of one song whose punning refrain concentrates the protest of the English masses against clerical exploitation: "Once Simon was here, but now is Simony."[1] In the fourteenth century religious satire was class satire, just because the Church had become identical with feudal rule and the most obvious compendium of the resulting social injustices.

[6] *Cf.* the ironic wit in *The Owl and the Nightingale* (Mätzner, *Mittelenglische . . . Literaturproben*, ed. 2, p. 125, esp. lines 1177 *ff.*).

[1] *Old English Miscellany*, ed. Morris, p. 89.

There are, of course, numerous poems which make subrisive assault upon secular feudalism only. Such is that pungent allegory, *On the King's Breaking his Confirmation of Magna Charta* which mildly suggests that the great charter has been held too near the fire and, being of wax, has melted away.[2] But at other times the class protest speaks so broadly as to attack all learning. Under the mock-simple allegory of *Piers the Plowman's Creed*, written before Chaucer's death, lies a reproach against peasants who, by allowing themselves to be "corrupted" with a zeal for knowledge, become priests and thereby remove themselves into the ranks of the lettered enemy.

It is easy, of course, to over-simplify the class elements in medieval irony, for not only were there satirists in both camps, feudal and *bourgeois*, but there were men like Langland who were not really conscious of which side they championed, while such intellectual pioneers as Wiclif were not aware of the profundity of the political issues which they raised. Moreover, internal dissensions within the classes had their own reflection in ironic literature. *Richard the Redeless*, a court man's attack upon Richard II, became of necessity also a series of guarded puns directed against other courtiers. Until the fourteenth century, too, in England skilled "literary" satire was predominantly clerical in origin, since the clergy had almost a monopoly of learning. The major exception, the gleeman, entered the field of social satire only, as ten Brink has remarked, to denounce the gluttony and bawdry of pages, grooms, and any others who might be his professional rivals for court favour. It is natural, then, that the folk attacks on the clergy and their feudal rôle should arouse learned counter-attack. But when the cleric *per se* becomes ironic, it is with a different smile

[2] *Political Songs*, ed. Thomas Wright, I, p. 253.

on the face—contemptuous rather than savage, mocking rather than snarling. Such is the *Satire of the Men of Stockton*, a burlesque account of a council which had been held by serf leaders on the eve of their attempt to force legal concessions from their local monastery. The attempt failed, much to the satisfaction of the poet.[3]

## VI. Parody and Burlesque

Such burlesques deserve independent place in any survey of irony. Like its cousin Parody, with which it is generally confused, Burlesque is a Brobdignagian variant of the satire of overstatement. Parody mocks a literary form by exaggerating its defects at the very moment it pretends a docile imitation. Of such is Beerbohm's *Christmas Garland* and Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*. The more jovial Burlesque draws laughter not from the form it affects but from the material which it pretends to consider worthy of that form. This is the spirit of the mock-heroic *Nun's Priest's Tale*. Though Chaucer may have found his finest models, for both poems, in the Latin of the goliards or the *sottes chansons* of the French, yet each was already at home on English soil. The St. George of that ancient folk-piece, the *Mummer's Play*, is a fustian Quixote, as willing to be bought off as to fight.[1] There is a fine *bourgeois* "romance of prys," the *Turnament of Totenham*, where heavy-footed yokels engage in knightly tilt; as a prize, the reeve has offered his daughter, with a spotted sow thrown in.[2] The word *gesta* is rapidly becoming jests.

Unknightly woodcarvers, in the same century, were

[3] *Anecdota Literaria*, ed. Thomas Wright, pp. 49-51.

[1] See lines 46-9 of the normalized text, in E. K. Chambers, *The English Folk-Play*, p. 7.

[2] See *Cambridge History of English Literature*, I, p. 366.

venting similar humour in the misericords of Bristol Cathedral, where chivalric combatants are mounted on geese and hogs.[3] Indeed, burlesque was tolerated in the holiest places of medieval Britain. Those mock-religious carnivals variously known as the feasts of the Ass, the Fool, or the Innocents, were permitted to troop into the English churches as into those of the continent. In spirit and perhaps even origin, these festivals extended back to the Roman Saturnalia.[4] Lords of Misrule, Abbots of Unreason, Popes of Folly, were, under the amazing catholicity of the One Catholic Church, allowed to preside over macaronic parodies of the mass, to the accompaniment of ludicrous music, costume, dumb show, feasting—and even, it is said, of dicing upon the altars. Such travesties, edged with satire of clerical shortcomings, were evidently to the humour of those clerics themselves. "It was," says F. H. Hedge, "the irony of the Church herself, the Nemesis of faith, religion resenting its own sanctities."[5]

Perhaps the finest piece of comic irony before Chaucer, the *Land of Cockaygne*,[6] is a fusion of the two forms, burlesque and parody. The sustained dexterity with which the mirage of the Earthly Paradise is scaled to the lowest level of monkish desire is given added comicality by a close adaptation of the poem's form to the most pious phrases of the standard medieval vision, with its catalogue of the flowers, fruits, and birds of the standard heaven. The poem is at the same time the most devas-

[3]See F. Bond, *Wood-Carvings in English Churches*, I, pp. 159-60.

[4]See Thomas Wright, *Hist. of Caricature and Grotesque*, p. 207.

[5]"Irony" (*Atheism in Philosophy . . .*, 1884, p. 327).

[6]Mätzner-Goldbeck, *Altenglische Sprachproben*, I, pp. 147 *ff*. For the classical "cockaygne" tradition see *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, XLI, 1910, p. 175; and Lenient, *La Satire en France au Moyen Age*, ed. 1893, p. 92.

tating and the best humoured of all the attacks on monastic sensuality—perhaps because written by someone "on the inside" of monastery walls, someone who could dream of a land where hot-roasted geese fly unaided through the sky to the platters of holy men, and where Sister Water is used only for washing or for ornament. The humour is compact of traditions which wander back to Lucian, and forward to the "Rock-Candy Mountains" of the American hobo.

## VII. Ironists

In all this irony there are few ironists. It is not simply that satirists wisely preferred anonymity even if it were not conferred upon them by the "ravage of six long sad hundred years," but that the consciousness of irony as a continued personal method, stamped with the individuality of the author, seems lacking from writers in English, as it was not lacking in the Provençal Arnaut Daniel, or in Rutebeuf. This is partly explainable by the fact that those who strove for irony consciously as for any artistic grace, were likely to be scholars who wrote in Latin. So the great English names of Becket's secretary, the Ovidian John of Salisbury, of Neckham, of that saturnine Canterbury precentor Nigellus Wirker, and of Walter Map, are only names to those who do not read medieval Latin. But they were undoubtedly more than that to Chaucer, and perhaps also to two or three men who preceded him in the known ranks of English ironists, to Mannyng, to John of Trevisa, and perhaps even to Wiclif. Whatever their literary models these last were conscious ironists. Another, whose name has not survived, is the author of a goliardic *Satire on the People of Kildare* (written c. 1300). Here is the shameless intrusion of the jesting "maker," that effervescence which provides the link with Chaucer,

though this Anglo-Irishman's irony is of the boastful rather than the sly order. At the end of each racy stanza he appends a couplet in which he gazes, with unabashed delight, upon the skill of his own raillery:

> Hail to ye, brewsters, with your gallons,
> Your pottles and quarterns, all around the town:
> Your thumbs take much away, shame to your guile;
> Beware of the cucking-stool, the lake is deep and hoary.
> (Certainly he was a clerk
> Who so slyly wrote this work!)[1]

For Mannyng and Trevisa, sarcasm was a regular form of annotation, the escape of men who, though incensed by abuses, were scrupulous in dogma. So Mannyng pauses in the midst of his holy *exempla* for rapier thrusts at the Women and the Landlords; Trevisa amplifies his author Higden with solemn sneers at all fat begging priests. As for Wiclif, he was too earnestly the fighter to risk irony except when he had already bound his victim securely with the strong cords of denunciation. But no preacher was then more expert in the solemn anti-climax than the *enfant terrible* of Oxford. He concludes a painstaking examination of the inefficacy of "letters of fraternity" sold by wandering friars, with the grave deduction: "Be siche resouns thinken many men that thes lettris mai do good for to covere mostard pottis."[2]

The hoax of Mandeville's *Travels* is well known; as a work of irony it belongs to the department of literary fraudulency, with *The Strange Case of Mrs. Veal*, and the wilder adventures of Richard Halliburton. But it stands above its descendants in the impertinency of its coney-catching. Purporting to be a humble guide-book for pilgrims to Jerusalem, and opening with a sanctimonious

[1] Modernized from *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, p. 176.
[2] *Select English Works*, ed. Arnold, I, p. 381.

prologue urging reverence for the Holy Land, it rapidly develops into a collection of the most impossible geographical gossip and anthropological superstition of which those times were capable, all carefully integrated and made respectable by a process of documentary lying unsurpassed till Defoe. We now know that its origins were French, but its fame and its influence were English.

Langland—or whoever wrote *Piers Plowman*—was potentially a great ironist. Any man who has the dramatic sense to cloak his teaching and his denunciation under an allegory so gigantic and yet so completely humanized as *Piers Plowman*, had the poise of irony. But Langland saw too clearly the need for strenuous indignation, was too sensitive to the tempo of the times, to the swiftly succeeding rebellions of Wiclif, the peasants, the parliament, to allow his voice to be weakened with philosophic apathy or courtly mildness. Chaucer was amused by the contradictory society of his day, but Langland looked upon this same world as something infinitely worse than ever had been or would be. Neither was the clear spokesman for a class. Chaucer climbed from the vigour of the awakening burghers into the fading glory of a feudal court and never quite resolved his own dualism even by irony; Langland, though he impresses one as having been born of the people, and though he certainly spoke with their accents, did not announce or even suspect the impending advance of the artisan and trader. While the merchants and small country land-owners were opening that long parliamentary struggle which was to reach its triumphant conclusion only by the arms of Cromwell, Langland dreamed of the Christian re-establishment of early "ideal" feudalism. While Chaucer entertained a society to which he did not fully belong and whose decadence never really infected

him, Langland stood amid a labouring mass which was historically incapable of political leadership, and from it he thundered in splendour, impotently yet with perfect self-confidence.

Only rarely does he pause for direct irony, and never if his own position would be the least obscured by it. In the first seven *passus* and prologue of *Piers Plowman* there are less than a score of examples; and these are either proverbial understatements, or allegory become, for the moment, subtle and even fiercely comic. The most bitterly absurd of the latter is the confession of Covetousness. That worthy is represented as having a long rascally experience in banking and trading (forms of robbery as yet but imperfectly legalized):

"Dids't never repent," quoth Repentance, "nor restitution make?"
"Yes, once I was at an inn," quoth he, "with a heap of merchants.
I rose when they were asleep and rifled their packs."
"That was no restitution," quoth Repentance, "but a robber's theft.
Thou deservest better to be hanged for this
Than for all else that thou hast here revealed."

Covetousness is sorry; he never went to school and so knows not this new-fangled word "restitution:"

"I thought rifling was 'restitution'," quoth he, "for I never studied in books,
And I know no French, 'ifaith, except of Norfolk's farthest corner."[1]

Chaucer, being Chaucer, had little to learn from these rare grim jests of Langland, nor can we be sure that he went to school to any one ironist, English or continental; but he could scarcely escape the influence of this long tradition of ironic speech in the language and literature of his own country. No one has rightly savoured the great ironies of the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* if he has

[1]Modernized from Skeat's ed., Text B: V, 232-9. *Cf.* the last line with Chaucer's famous remark on the French of his Prioress.

not also tasted the coltish wit of Gamelyn, or the elaborately guarded assaults of the political ballad-mongers, or the *saeva indignatio* of Bromyard and Wiclif. Even the Italianate *Troilus* can be better understood if we catch echoes, behind its perfect cadences, of those mournful overtones of Fate in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or of Hendyng's wry and slangy wisdom.

There are, of course, still more important ancestral ghosts of Chaucer's irony to be conjured from other literatures—the Latin and Italian and French worthies whose names we have been compelled to hurry over, or to leave unmentioned. There are the anecdotal elegances of Ovid and Appolinarus Sidonus and Ekkehard IV, and of John of Bridlington and Jean de Hauteville; the ironies, tragic and comic, of the Vulgate; the edged praises of Dante for his birthplace, Florence; the subtle malices of Jean de Meun and Jean de Condé and Deschamps; the dramatic intricacies of the French fabliaux; and the wit of that greatest and most delightful treasury of all medieval irony, the multiple saga of Reynard the Fox. But that is another, and still longer, story.

# LETTERS IN CANADA: 1936

## Part II: FRENCH-CANADIAN LETTERS

### Introduction

The necessity, for this year only, of printing "Letters in Canada" in two parts was explained in the Introduction to Part I (April issue, pp. 338-40). It should be observed: (1) that Professor Walter's essay, which covers the whole field of French-Canadian letters, would normally (and will henceforth) take its place as Essay IV, immediately after the three dealing with creative literature in English-speaking Canada; (2) that in subsequent surveys the French-Canadian lists will take their respective places immediately after each of the English-Canadian lists. We must repeat our acknowledgments of the valuable aid received from the University Library, and from Miss Audrey Cordingley of that institution. And we reiterate our request for corrections, criticisms, and suggestions, since the collection and arrangement of the French-Canadian material present certain difficulties, not encountered in the English field in anything like the same degree.

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### VI. FRENCH-CANADIAN LETTERS — Felix Walter

In his otherwise sympathetic and well-informed essay on "Unknown Quebec," which appeared in the October number of the University of Toronto Quarterly, Professor Lower took it upon himself to dismiss French-Canadian literature as "a matter of romantic novels, tepid poetry, or stylistic criticism." Now, there is nothing like plain-speaking, but this affirmation, to my mind, comes perilously close to what the French would call a *boutade*. Quebec is touchy these days and Professor Lower had better be careful, or, like his incautious colleague from Columbia, he will find himself the object of a motion of censure before the Quebec Legislature. Far from agreeing with this writing-down of the merits of French-Canadian literature, it seems to me that, from the turn of the century at any rate, French-Canadian novelists, poets, and critics have been marching steadily away from the "romantic," the "tepid," and the "stylistic." And as I sit down,

after reading about half a hundred representative works, to review what French Canadians wrote and published in 1936, I feel still more strongly that the era of dithyrambic treacle which characterized so much of French- (and English-) Canadian literature in the nineteenth century is pretty much a thing of the past. To-day much of what is being written in French Canada may seem perverse to English-Canadian readers, but no one can deny that it is both lively and contemporary.

A surer estimate of contemporary French-Canadian literature, and one which in its way is no less blunt than Professor Lower's, appeared in the pages of a sister-journal at about the same time. Writing in the November number of *Le Canada Français*, which is published by Laval University, the critic Maurice Hébert sums up the problem of the approach to any French-Canadian work in two sentences: "Parmi le fatras des ouvrages canadiens, on trouve du bon, du mauvais et du pire. . . . Nos lettres ont leur mérite, mais elles ne transcendent pas encore." In other words, French-Canadian literature is not French literature, any more than English-Canadian literature is English or even American literature; the critic must exercise his sense of proportion, but there is no need to bang the door in disgust.

If one piles up on a long shelf all the books published in French in this country in 1936 and runs an eye along the titles, one is struck at once by the fact that *belles-lettres* are largely outnumbered by works on history, economics, and politics, supplemented by an unusually large amount of propaganda in the form of tracts. The reasons are not far to seek. For some time now the younger, more active, and more articulate elements in Quebec have been dazzled by fascism and galvanized by an unusually violent revival of nationalism. "Laurentia" and the "Corporate State" are watchwords of the moment, and energies that even two or three years ago would have been devoted to verse or fiction find their tumultuous expression in studies in ancestor-worship after models furnished by the Abbé Lionel Groulx. The fever has even spread to the *belles-lettres* themselves. There is at least one novel (*Allie* by Joseph Lallier) whose sole purpose seems to be the expression of the author's anglophobe and anti-semitic sentiments, and many critical essays which begin with a discussion of literary matters end up as a call to arms. *Leur Inquiétude* by François Hertel is a case in point. Even a favourable notice of last year's "Letters in Canada"

(*Revue des Livres*, April, 1936) turns out to be merely a twig on which to hang a nationalist sermon.

A further reason for the inferior position at present occupied by imaginative literature proper is to be found in the complaint voiced by French-Canadian publishers that the increasing interest in poetry and fiction from France—in itself a healthy sign—is making it less profitable than it was to publish native efforts in the same fields, especially as there is practically no reciprocity. An English-Canadian poet or novelist who makes his mark here can count on invading the British and American book-markets, whereas how many cultivated French readers have even heard of the novels of Claude-Henri Grignon or Léo-Paul Desrosiers, the poetry of Choquette, DesRochers, or Chopin?

But if 1936 is an off-year for *belles-lettres* that is no reason for not assigning them the place of honour with the poets in the van.

In poetry, Roger Brien is the discovery of the year. Independence of mind, vigour, and considerable technical variety are the main features of his *Faust aux enfers*. The long poem which gives the title to the volume, and which was to have been called "Tous les espoirs nous raillent," is the best sustained poetic effort which has appeared since Choquette's *Metropolitan Museum*. In his search for the verities, Faust, the personification of the seeker, gropes reeling through a world of nightmare, a Canadian version of Eliot's *The Waste Land:*

> Tout le ciel était rouge et tout le sol flambait
> En des odeurs de mort, âcres comme un sulfure.
> Des gaz asphyxiants avaient gavé le monde.
> De partout, des fumées montaient nauséabondes.
> Oui, fumées que ces vies dont le sang fermentait
> La mort à plein cuvier, ce sang qui s'étendait
> Comme un grand lac rougeâtre en tourbillons d'efforts.

Brien in his shorter poems can be as eloquent in a more modern idiom, especially when he is writing of one of his chief inspirations, the port of his native Montreal:

> C'est de t'avoir peut-être trop aimé,
> De t'avoir trop chanté que je porte en moi-même
> Le décalque cendré de tes murs, de tes quais.
> C'est peut-être aussi, si j'ai la face blême,
> Que je suis né de toi, que ta chair et ma chair
> Ne font qu'une à travers
> La dynamite des efforts
> De tes marins au dos arqué.

Religious poems, political poems, experiments in *vers libres*, which would be more successful if rhyme were used more sparingly, follow one another in succession. There is a general air of freshness and newness in both theme and manner, but who if not a French Canadian has a right to be a pioneer, even in poetry!

After the full orchestra of *Faust aux enfers* some of the other volumes of verse seem more modest and unimportant than they really are. Jeanne L'Archevêque Duguay's *Cantilènes* are a pleasing combination of poems of the *terroir* and of simple religious faith, reminiscent in both matter and technical execution of the poetry of Claudel and of Jammes. Jean Gillet, the author of *Brunes & blondes*, is a young novice of twenty-one who likes pretty women from a respectful distance and can say so graciously and with a minimum of affectation. He can also play over the familiar variations of reverie, suffering, and prayer. When he has broken away from the tyranny of his quatrain form and has deepened his emotional experience it will be possible to tell whether or not he has the real stuff of poetry in him. A veteran, Albert Ferland, closes the ranks of the poets. Nearly thirty years have gone by since his first volume was published and the main inspiration of this survivor of the *Ecole de Montréal* has not altered greatly since the days when he revived regional poetry by infusing it with a much-needed dose of modern sensitiveness. *En Marge des champs* and *Fleurs du silence* are the titles of two short groups of his poems which appear in the *Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada*.

In bulk at least fiction makes a braver show than poetry, and Moïsette Olier with two novels to her credit should receive first consideration. *Mademoiselle Sérénité* and *Etincelles* are both primarily regional novels, novels set in the author's native Mauricie, the one in and about the Three Rivers of to-day, the second moved back in time and with its scene laid at the picturesque Forges du Saint-Maurice, where the author spent her childhood. Both are love-stories of conventional pattern and are evidence of a tendency which French-Canadian critics are the first to deplore, the tendency to flood a work of fiction with purely literary reminiscence instead of working straight from the raw material of life. Yet Mlle Olier can do characters from the life when she wants to. Père Morin in *Etincelles* steps straight out of *habitant* reality and is a hundred times more convincing than the student author of the impossible love-letters in *Mademoiselle Sérénité*.

Moïsette Olier writes pleasingly, but—a literary reminiscence again—there is sometimes an over-abundance of the *cliché* epithets of another age in the fabric of her descriptive prose. Thus in one paragraph in *Etincelles*, the reader is introduced to the "fière silhouette" of the ironmaster's house set in its "cadre de verdure" facing the "grandeur sauvage" of the river which, of course, has "des rives boisées." From the house itself can be heard the "fervente mélopée des vagues." Nor are we spared the "frémissant labeur" of the mill overlooked by the "regard scrutateur" of the house's windows. But Mlle Olier is not the worst offender. In Benoît Desforêts's *Un Sillon dans la forêt* there is a passage which is a perfect pastiche of Chateaubriand in theme, in treatment, and even in rhythm. The sixteen-year-old daughter of a settler has died:

> Le corps de la jeune vièrge fut descendu dans l'humble fosse de sable du cimetière d'alors. Ce lieu de sépulture, abandonné depuis, est aujourd'hui solitaire, envahi par la végétation rapide et sauvage des landes incultes. Bien des croix sont tombées, des noms, effacés, des chagrins, oubliés. C'est là-haut sur la butte aride, inconnue de beaucoup, l'ancien champ des morts, triste deux fois, pour les défunts qui ne sont plus qu'une poussière humaine introuvable, et pour les mausolées eux-mêmes qui disparaissent.
>
> Tout récemment, un ami de la famille Gaudreau, parcourant en pèlerin cet endroit d'austère poésie, fut conduit, sans doute par l'âme de la pieuse enfant, parmi les débris et les herbes folles, près d'une épitaphe encore lisible.

Apart from this tendency to lapse into the style of four generations ago, M. Desforêts is very successful in his treatment of the rigours of pioneer life in the Mistassini district in the days before the building of the Trappist monastery. The vein is the vein of Gérin-Lajoie and of Hémon, but M. Desforêts, as far as characterization and the creation of atmosphere are concerned, shows that he has a perfect right to be mentioned in that distinguished company.

Maurice Constantin-Weyer and Marie LeFranc are both well-known French novelists who have staked out literary claims in Canada which they exploit with some regularity. The former after a few years of ranch life in the West is permanently repatriated. Moreover, in spite of his real success in putting down on paper the feel and atmosphere of nature and the elements in the Canadian North-West, Constantin-Weyer has never managed to cope with the human problem, and in his treatment of Canadians, other than the *métis* of Manitoba, reveals the strictly limited horizons of a provincial Frenchman. For these reasons one is tempted to do nothing more than record the title of his *Telle qu'elle était en son vivant* and

pass on to consider the far more substantial claims of Marie LeFranc. This novelist also is French and not Canadian, but during the last two decades she has lived almost more in Canada than in her native Brittany. *La Randonnée passionnée* is a page in Mlle LeFranc's extremely sensitive study of the woods and lakes of the North Country, and of the men who roam them. In mood and setting it belongs beside *Hélier fils des bois*, though this time instead of being a solitude-thirsty woman the escapee is a man, Philippe Jarl, descendant of a family of Jersey privateers long settled on Bonaventure Island. But the forest has kept its sex; it is still emphatically male:

> Elle n'était que mâles suggestions, inspiratrice d'ardeurs, de joutes de combats et de complots virils, de cruautés millénaires. De la ceinture puissante des mélèzes, les branches pendaient ainsi que des scalps, et les troncs des bouleaux étaient des torses nus d'adolescents qui prenaient conscience de leur virilité. Un pin solitaire se tenait penché sur une hauteur, les bras en croix, pareil à un skieur qui va prendre son élan dans le vide.

The forest is not only a male being, but it is still the abode of many divinities and Mlle LeFranc is perhaps happiest when she is making this interpretation clear:

> Les arbres sont des êtres vêtus de deuil, des hiboux frileux ramassés dans leurs plumes, des créatures empalées qui agonisent de souffrance. Au-dessus se dresse le ciel du nord, d'une hauteur fantastique, lentement parcouru par des nuages en harmonie. Un grand loup noir chevauche la lune; deux cerfs galopent, attelés à un traineau et un homme vêtu d'une peau d'animal les fouette.
>
> Le lac des Herbes, prisonnier hirsute, regarde humblement dans la direction des hommes.

Mlle LeFranc is most ingenious at utilizing the raw material of her Canadian sojourns; thus her by now notorious climb up Mont Tremblant by night becomes a midnight ascension of the Grand Tépée, Grey Owl appears as Grey Héron, and even the pilgrimage to Gaspé is used at the end. Nor has Mlle LeFranc abated in her determination to let the world know of the sufferings of the Gaspé fishermen, though similar publicity a year ago brought down the thunderbolts of M. Taschereau. "La Gaspésie, ça s'en va en ruines," cries old Dion. "La morue a presque disparu. Tout not' bien est hypothéqué aux bourgeois."

Eugène Achard is another Canadian by adoption, though an even more permanent one than Marie LeFranc. He is the author of the best historical novel of the year, *L'Homme blanc de Gaspé*, a chronicle of Jacques Cartier's first voyage, the strength of which

lies in the fact that M. Achard sticks closely to the *Relation*, and so his readers thread the waters of the Gulf with the fresh curiosity of the men on the *Courlieu* and the *Malouine* four centuries ago. It is a simple recipe but just the right one. A sequel, *Sur le grand Fleuve du Canada*, will treat of the second voyage.

Two volumes of short stories remain to be considered in the field of fiction. One, *Contes de Noël*, is from the pen of the distinguished critic Louis Dantin. From its cover and the moralizing contents one half suspects it should be dealt with under the heading of "Books for Children." The other, *Le Livre des mystères*, is by Léo-Paul Desrosiers. Readers can hardly have forgotten his *Nord-Sud* which surely ranks among the three or four best French-Canadian novels published since the War. This volume of studies, for they are hardly stories, will not disappoint M. Desrosiers's admirers. Apart from the first one, "Marie," which is largely an essay at reconstructing a *habitant* family reunion, rather in the Adjutor Rivard vein, the author presents a series of psychological sketches. He has a mild sophistication that is refreshing and even to come across the name of Virginia Woolf is a pleasure, though no evidence is really needed that M. Desrosiers's reading has got well beyond the Henri Bordeaux and René Bazin stage where all too many of his compatriots are still stuck fast.

In French-Canadian literature the theatre has never been a *genre* productive of much distinguished writing. This year the chief contribution to the drama proper comes from Alberta, and indeed Emma Morrier's *Quatre Essais de théâtre national* is the first work of any kind published in French by a French Canadian of that province. One of the plays, *Bon Sang ne ment pas*, won the Regional Drama Festival competition last year. Mlle Morrier's plays are interesting as experiments, but they do not yet foreshadow the advent of the great Canadian playwright.

Playlets and serialized programmes of dramatic dialogue broadcast over the radio are becoming popular everywhere, and in French Canada this practice has produced at least one play which later toured the Province of Quebec successfully with flesh-and-blood actors. I refer to Henry Deyglun's *Roman d'une orpheline*. Radio is also responsible for one of the really notable works of the year in any field, Robert Choquette's *Le Curé de village*. A good many years ago, when M. Choquette, not yet established as a poet, published his novel, *La Pension Leblanc*, many people felt that in

this distinguished failure was to be discerned the promise of that ability to create a whole world of make-believe which is the hall-mark of the real novelist or the real playwright. That new world projected from his imagination now exists, and a French-Canadian critic suggests that it should be christened Choquetteville. The central figure is the cultured *curé*, at his best as a talented and exquisite story-teller. It has its mayor, Anatole Théberge, who presides with authority over the priceless deliberations of the *conseil municipal*. There is the old maid, the ne'er-do-well, the local M.P., the village swains, the young *habitant* couple—in fact a complete French-Canadian village with the picturesque names of its inhabitants, Elie Brindamour, Mérilda, Mme Veuve Prudent Sirois, Pacifique Rivet, Gédéon Toupin, and the equally picturesque oaths, "vieux Gibraltar," "étoile croche," "ciboule de ciboule." Its good humour and broad comedy do not really hide the fact that the *Curé de village* is a sympathetic, authentic, and indeed a really profound study of French-Canadian village life.

Literary scholarship and literary criticism are, on the whole, adequately represented in 1936. In fact there is no department in which, over a number of years, steady improvement has been so marked. The days when Henri d'Arles and Louis Dantin were about the only critics worth mentioning are gone and there is now a substantial corps of them at work. Under the heading of scholarship, mention should be made of Sister Paul-Emile's *Le Renouveau Marial dans la littérature française depuis Chateaubriand jusqu'à nos jours*. It is a competent and well-written doctorate thesis which was presented to the University of Ottawa. A professorial reader's only regret is that the examining university does not insist on theses being properly buttressed with bibliography and index. Sister Paul-Emile's thesis would have been doubly valuable thus equipped. A delightful, almost a hilarious contribution to scholarship is *Vieux papiers; vieilles chansons* by Father Hugolin Lemay. This industrious investigator came across some manuscript copies of eighteenth-century satirical songs in the library of the *hôtel-dieu* at Quebec and supplemented this find by discoveries at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. The songs chiefly celebrate the various reverses suffered by British arms in Canada from the shipwreck of Walker's fleet at the Isle aux Oeufs to the Battle of Carillon. The songs themselves are amusing, and Father Lemay's wit sets them out to good advantage.

First among the professional critics now "reigning" over French-Canadian letters is Maurice Hébert, whose dicta were quoted on the first page of this review. His volume in 1936 bears the title *Les Lettres au Canada Français* (*Ière série*) and is a collection of miscellaneous essays. Many are reviews of current works executed with the thoroughness and judicial balance which make his criticism valuable. M. Hébert does not always spare the feelings of his compatriots, and, in an interesting essay called "Entre Nous," he scolds them for their low efficiency as book-consumers and makes the startling statement that three and a half times as many copies of *Maria Chapdelaine* were sold in Egypt as in all Canada. Towards the end of the volume M. Hébert is attracted by the powerful magnet of nationalism and the reader is treated to the usual recital of the creed that there is not, nor can there ever be, such a thing as a Canadian, together with the usual homily on the money-grubbing, materialistic nature of English Canadians. The French Canadian, however, is a pure-souled idealist; on page 207, at least. On page 238 he is pictured as essentially devoted to the doctrine of *primum vivere*. M. Hébert will have to make up his mind; he cannot have it both ways.

Father Lamarche, director of the *Revue Dominicaine*, is another critic to appear in book-form. His *Nouvelles Ebauches critiques* views a variety of contemporary authors and works, largely from an ethico-religious standpoint. But Father Lamarche is tolerant and is far from neglecting aesthetic principles altogether. He is interested in the problem of nationalism too, but can hardly be said to see eye to eye with M. Hébert. Indeed, to paraphrase his own words, he objects strongly to the French-Canadian goldfish being cut off from universal culture in a bowl marked Laurentia.

All the critical essayists wind up in nationalism, and it is impossible to keep away from a discussion of this question any longer. It sifts on to almost every page of current French-Canadian writing. Even Canon Chartier, discussing a long-dead school of poets before the Royal Society, is more interested in their patriotic temperature than in their poetic ability. It would really require a whole article to discuss all the aspects, both political and economic, of the current attitude, and in the space at my disposal I can only arrange the chief contemporary sources in some sort of order and run over them *seriatim*. There is first the question of the Corporate State. The most complete discussion of this system, envisaged for French

Canada, is to be found in *L'Organisation professionnelle*, the bulky volume of proceedings of the congress held last summer at Three Rivers by the *Semaines Sociales du Canada*. On this occasion the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, the Papal Legate, Cardinal Villeneuve, professors, politicians, and many others united in praise of the proposed system, which was to draw its spiritual inspiration from the two papal encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, and its concrete example largely from the clerical, authoritarian régimes in power in Austria and in Portugal. The same ideas, predigested for popular consumption, are to be found in various pamphlets issued by the *Ecole Sociale Populaire*, by the University of Ottawa, and in the form of reprints of articles from *Le Devoir*. After this state funeral of liberalism, Victor Barbeau, in *Mesure de notre taille*, sets forth another contemporary grievance, the strangle-hold exercised by English Canadians and other "foreigners" on big business in the Province of Quebec. The nationalist crusade in all its aspects is presented in its most extreme form by a very extraordinary book, a sort of monster catechism, in which the one hundred per cent. French-Canadian patriot may learn correct thought on literally any topic from the conduct of Lord Dorchester to the problem of feeding children between meals. This compendium is called *La Réponse de la race*, is signed "Lambert Closse," and is dedicated, very properly, to the Abbé Groulx. That it is violently anti-Masonic and anti-semitic goes without saying, and the pseudo Lambert Closse goes so far as to reprint those frequently discredited forgeries, the so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Fortunately there is a rational wing to the nationalist movement. *Notre Position au Canada* by Jean-Marie Fortin, which is one of the Jeune-Canada tracts, surveys the French-Canadian position with a good deal more sweetness and light. M. Fortin even warns his comrades that English Canadians nowadays are not all undesirable emigrants, some by a long sojourn have even acquired "un certain vernis, sinon des manières d'aristocrates." For a really critical analysis of French-Canadian nationalism one must turn to works by the regular clergy who seem, for fairly obvious reasons, less enthusiastic towards extreme separatism than some of their secular colleagues. A Dominican, Father Louis Lachance, in his *Nationalisme et religion*, submits racism, nationalism, and patriotism to a rigorous Thomistic scrutiny. Father Théophile Hudon of the Society of Jesus in his

*Est-ce la Fin de la Confédération* asks a number of awkward questions with an air of studied innocence. The more fanatic apostles of Laurentia are gently urged to look before they leap. In a witty preface a fellow Jesuit, Father J.-L. Lavoie, speculates on certain problems of nomenclature in the new state. "La Laurentie," he writes, "comprendrait des provinces comme la Mauricie, la Chaudière, la Montmorencycie, la Kamouraskaki; jusque-là ça va bien. Mais comment cuisiner la Beauce pour la tourner en scie? . . . Je suggérai . . . qu'on pourrait proposer la Jarretnoircie ou, si ça ne passait pas, la Beauce-icitte."

It is pleasant to turn from this polemical literature to a well-balanced, scholarly volume of essays like *Le Front contre la vitre*, which is from the pen of Professor Edouard Montpetit, the distinguished economist. Professor Montpetit is also interested in the problem of Anglo-French relations in this country and he goes deeply into the mystery of the English character with learned quotations from Salvador de Madariaga and Louis Cazamian. One wonders if Professor Montpetit finds his fellow-Canadians so mysterious that he must cross the Atlantic in search of light. His solution of the racial conflict is both ingenious and chivalrous. Let French and English in Canada keep their identity and continue their struggle, he says, but in the spirit of rival football teams. Some particularly charming essays on travels in France to the well-springs of Canadian history round out an excellent volume.

Historical works are more properly discussed in a sister-journal, but note should be taken in passing of the Abbé Albert Tessier's *Ceux qui firent notre Pays*, and Robert Rumilly's two volumes of studies, *Artisans du miracle canadien*. The latter author has also published a very detailed biography of Mercier. The Abbé Groulx has another book of historical sermons, *Notre Maître le passé* (second series). But the most picturesque volume to appear under the rubric of history is *Les Cahiers des Dix*, the collective production of an academy of veteran historians who have joined forces in Montreal. The group includes such honoured names as Ægidius Fauteux, Pierre-Georges Roy, and E.-Z. Massicotte. This is "la petite histoire" written with urbanity and presented with a richness of paper and type unusual in this country.

There remain a few miscellaneous works to consider. The genealogist Emile Falardeau has an intriguing volume on Antoine-Sébastien Falardeau, the French-Canadian farm-boy who ran away

from home to be a painter and who finally reached Italy, where he flourished about the middle of last century. MM. Audet and Malchelosse, with their *Pseudonymes canadiens*, have rendered a considerable service to the student of French-Canadian literature. Surely no people on earth are so addicted to the pen-name and even this latest compendium is far from listing them all. Léon Lorrain has a somewhat conservative work on language entitled *Les Etrangers dans la cité*. M. Lorrain, following in the tradition of the *Société du Parler Français*, is loath to admit of any compromise in Canadian French. It must be standard French or nothing. His intransigent attitude in this respect is in striking contrast to Professor Montpetit's greater tolerance. In the volume of essays already referred to, the latter expresses the opinion that Canadians may have a contribution of their own to make to French and takes pride in the invention of "papermane" for "peppermint" and the secondary meaning given to "réaliser," but M. Lorrain will have none of this. He even scorns to mention the good old French-Canadian word "poudrerie" as a permissible translation for "blizzard" and thinks "police montée" a barbarism that should be replaced straight away by "gendarmerie à cheval."

Books for children should not pass unnoticed in such a survey as this. Marie-Claire Daveluy is the chief guardian of French Canada's fairies and the most prolific writer of her fairy-stories. Not least among her achievements has been her popularization of indigenous folk-lore. She has two volumes to her credit for 1936, and the first of these, *Sur les Ailes de l'oiseau bleu*, contains a very useful bibliography of fairy-stories in French. Maxine, another well-known writer of children's stories, also has two books. *Le Vendeur de paniers* is an adventure story with a child hero, while *Les trois Fées au bois d'épinette* belongs to the department of nature-study, as do the attractive little booklets of Harry Bernard and of the novelist A. Brassard.

One could wish that these books for children were all attractively presented. In most cases shoddy paper, crude illustrations, and unimaginative covers make them look like very poor relations beside the majority of the books for adults, whose standard of technical production has, on the whole, been improving steadily. *Le Cahier des Dix*, privately printed by the Imprimerie Le Rayon, is the handsomest book of the year. Another attractive volume, that by Father Lemay, was printed by the Imprimerie des Fran-

ciscains. Of the chief professional publishers, as far as technical book-production is concerned, the Editions du Totem, Granger, Beauchemin, and the Editions Albert Lévesque rank in the order named.

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## LISTS OF PUBLICATIONS[1]

### I. SELECTED PERIODICALS

(*with abbreviations*[2])

*Action économique des jeunes*, Montréal [Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales; student; monthly in session; 1934+].

*Action nationale*, Montréal [Ligue d'Action nationale; monthly; 1931+].

*Action universitaire*, Montréal [Université de Montréal; alumni; monthly, 10 issues; 1934+; ed. Jean Bruchesi]. *AU.*

*Actualité économique*, Montréal [Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales; monthly, 10 issues; 1925+; directeur, Henry Laureys, ed. Esdras Minville: economic and political studies, contemporary comment, bibliographies].

*Bulletin des Recherches historiques*, Québec [Archives de la Province de Québec; monthly; 1895+; ed. P.-G. Roy: historical and genealogical articles and notes]. *BRH.*

*Canada français*, Québec [Université Laval, organ of La Société du Parler français au Canada; monthly, 10 issues; 1918+ (in succession to *La Nouvelle France* and *Le Bulletin du Parler français*); directeur (Rev.) A. Labrie: historical and critical articles, reviews, reports]. *CFran.*

*Clarté*, Montréal, 254 est rue Ste Catherine [Popular Front weekly].

*Courrier du Cinema*, Montréal, 1425 rue Sainte Elisabeth [monthly; Dec. 1935+].

*Ecole canadienne*, Montréal [Commission des Écoles catholiques, 117 ouest rue Ste Catherine; monthly; 1925+; ed. R. Guénette].

*Ecole primaire*, Montréal, Librairie Générale Canadienne [6 issues; 1925+: lesson plans, exercises].

*Enseignement secondaire au Canada*, Québec [Université Laval; monthly; 1916+].

*Le Film*, Montréal, 975 rue de Bullion [monthly; 1920+; ed. Jean Chauvin: on moving picture industry].

*L'Hebdo-Laval*, Québec [Université Laval; undergraduate; weekly in session; 1928+].

*Les Idées*, Montréal, 3683 rue Saint-Hubert [monthly].

*Nos Cahiers*, Montréal, Studium franciscain, Boul. Rosemont [quarterly; April 1936+ (in succession to *Les Cahiers Franciscains*, 1931+): articles on philosophy, theology, history, letters, *etc.*]. *NC.*

[1]All references in the list are to 1936 except when another date is given. Following many of the items listed, attention is drawn to more extended reviews in other periodicals. An asterisk marks the names of those authors whom we believe not to be Canadians.

[2]Notice also the following abbreviations: *C—Canadian; CHR—Canadian Historical Review; DR—Dalhousie Review; Mém.SRC—Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada.*

*Oiseau bleu*, Montréal, 1182 rue Saint-Laurent [Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste; monthly, 10 issues; 1920+: juvenile].

*Ordre nouveau*, Montréal, 4260 rue de Bordeaux [semi-monthly; Oct. 5, 1936+: Roman Catholic anti-communistic comment].

*Les Pamphlets de Valdombre*, Saint-Adèle, (Terrebonne), P.Q. [monthly; déc., 1936+; ed. Claude-Henri Grignon: political and literary].

*Passe-temps*, Montréal, 20 est rue Craig [monthly; 1895+: musical, literary].

*Petite Revue*, Montréal, 320 est Notre-Dame [monthly; 1931+: articles on science *etc.*; short stories].

*Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, Ottawa [quarterly; 1931+; ed. R. Leblanc: articles on theology, philosophy, letters, history; reviews]. *RUO.*

*Revue des Livres*, Montréal [monthly; 1935-6; discontinued]. *RL.*

*Revue Dominicaine*, Montréal, 5375 Ave. N.-D. de Grace [monthly; ed. (Rev.) M.-A. Lamarche: articles on religious and national subjects; current affairs; reviews]. *RD.*

*Revue moderne*, Montréal, 320 Notre-Dame [monthly; 1919+: literary and home].

*Revue populaire*, Montréal, 975 rue de Bullion [monthly; 1907+; ed. Jean Chauvin: articles on history, letters, travel, popular science].

*Revue trimestrielle canadienne*, Montréal [Ecole polytechnique, Université de Montréal; quarterly; 1915+: articles in science and social sciences; reviews]. *RTC.*

*La Rotonde*, Ottawa [Société des Débats français de l'Université d'Ottawa; undergraduate; 18 issues; 1922+].

*Ruche littéraire*, Montréal, 5608 rue Stirling [League of Catholic Teachers; monthly; 1927+: juvenile].

*Le Samedi*, Montréal, 975 rue de Bullion [weekly; 1888+; ed. Jean Chauvin].

*Le Séminaire*, Montréal, 2065 ouest rue Sherbrooke [Revue de l'Association des Anciens Elèves du Grand Séminaire; 3 issues; 1936+; ed. Y. Charron].

*Le Terroir*, Québec, 76 rue Du Pont [Société des Arts, Sciences et Lettres de Québec; monthly; 1918+; ed. Alphonse Desilets: short stories, sketches, poems; illustrated].

## II. CULTURAL AND LITERARY HISTORY OF CANADA

### A. Selected Works of Reference

*Almanach de l'Action sociale catholique, 20e année, 1936.* Québec, Action sociale catholique, 128 pp. 50c.

*Almanach du peuple Beauchemin, vol. 67, 1936.* Montréal, Beauchemin, 480 pp. 25c.

AUDET, F.-J. and MALCHELOSSE, G. *Pseudonymes canadiens.* See VII A.

D., A. "Quelques journaux trifluviens" (*BRH* déc., 723-5).

JARAY, GABRIEL-LOUIS. "Les principaux livres sur l'histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale de 1534 à 1893" (*France-Amérique* déc., 233-47).

### B. Selected Studies in Historical and Contemporary Background

BERNARD, A. *Le drame acadien depuis 1604.* See VII A.

BOISMENU, LÉO. *Nos vieux manoirs.* Montréal, J.-H. Desjardins, 24 pp. $1.00.

BOVEY, WILFRID. *Canadien: Etude sur les Canadiens français.* Version française de GUILLAUME LAVALLÉE. (Documents sociaux.) Montréal, Lévesque, 325 pp. $1.25. Translation of *Canadien: A study of the French Canadians* (Dent, 1933). Revd. *CFran.* fév, 1937; *RTC* déc.

CLOSSE, LAMBERT. *La réponse de la race.* Montréal, Therien, 546 pp. $1.00.

CRUCHET, R. *Au Canada, vieille terre française.* See VII A.

DESROCHERS, RENÉ. *Le Sault-au-Récollet, "Paroisse La Visitation," 1736-1936: Fêtes du 2me centenaire.* Montréal, n.p., 159 pp. $1.50.

FORTIN, JEAN-MARIE. *Notre position au Canada.* (Tracts des Jeune-Canada, no. 6.) Montréal, Impr. au Devoir, 26 pp. 5c.

MARTIN, E. *L'Evangéline de Longfellow et la suite merveilleuse d'un poème.* See VII A.

*QUINEL, CH. et MONTGON, A. DE. *Jacques Cartier: Le découvreur du Canada.* Ill. P. COURTOIS. Paris, Nathan, 191 pp. 12.50 *frs.*

*QUINSONAS, Comte de. *Un Dauphinois, cinquième évêque de la Nouvelle-France, Monseigneur de Laubérivière (1711-1740),* par un de ses arrière-petits-neveux. Paris, Maisonneuve, 205 pp. $1.70. Revd. *RUO* avril-juin.

TANGHE, RAYMOND. *Montréal.* See VII A.

"La bibliothèque de J.-F. Cugnet," "La bibliothèque du juge de Bonne," "La bibliothèque du curé Dosque" (*BRH* janv., 10-3; mars, 136-43; mai, 310-3). "La *circulating library* ou bibliothèque circulante de Cary" (*BRH* août, 490—library established by Thomas Cary of the *Quebec Mercury* in the 1830's). GABRIEL-LOUIS JARAY, "La race française en Amérique et le comité France-Amérique" (*France-Amérique* janv., 6-8). "Notre americanisation" (series of articles in *Revue Dominicaine* janv.-déc). GÉRARD PARIZEAU, "Mon ami Etienne Parent" (*AU* fév., 50-1, 64—French-Canadian patriot and journalist, 1801-74). ADJUTOR RIVARD, "Quelques facteurs essentiels de la survivance française au Canada. III—La langue française agent de survivance française au Canada" (*France-Amérique* avril, 83-5). P.-G. R[OY], "Le journaliste Ronald MacDonald [1797-1854] (*BRH* juillet, 443-8). FIRMIN ROZ et E. PRÉCLIN, "L'influence de la France sur la vie intellectuelle des Canadiens-anglais et des Etats-Unis: Langue, culture, littérature et mouvement des idées" (*France-Amérique* janv., 9-11; avril, 89-91). M. TIROL, "Au Canada" (*QQ* spring, 62-7).

### C. Criticism of Canadian Literature and Speech

#### (a) General and Miscellaneous

BEAULIEU, GERMAIN. *Nos immortels.* Montréal, Lévesque, 157 pp. Revd. *RUO* janv.-mars, 1937.

HÉBERT, MAURICE. *Les lettres au Canada français* (1ère série.) (Série les jugements.) Montréal, Lévesque, 250 pp. $1.00. Revd. *CFran.* nov.; *RTC* sept., *RUO* oct.-déc.

LORRAIN, LÉON. *Les étrangers dans la cité.* Montréal, Les presses du Mercure, 740 ouest rue St-Paul, 140 pp. 75c. Revd. *RL* mai.

MORICE, A.-G. *Dans le champ des lettres canadiennes.* Winnipeg, chez l'auteur, 200 rue Austin, 110 pp. Revd. *CHR* March, 1937; *RUO* janv.-mars, 1937.

EMILE CHARTIER, "La vie de l'esprit au Canada français. 8e étude: La littérature politique, économique et sociale (1867-1920)—les écrivains récents" (*Mém. SRC*, XXIX, mai, 1935, 43-55). E.-B. DESCHÊNES, "Essai de toponymie Gaspésienne" (*BRH* mars, 148-73; avril, 200-15—study in place-names). MAURICE HÉBERT, "Critique et regionalisme" (*CFran.* nov., 253-65), "La littérature de langue française au Canada" (*France-Amérique* août, 153-7). GUSTAVE LANCTOT, "Faux et faussaires en histoire canadienne" (*C Historical Assoc. report*, 90-9). E.-Z. MASSICOTTE, "La destinée, la rose au bois" (*BRH* avril, 229-33—traces the origin of an old folk-song). OLIVIER MAURAULT, "Sur un manuel de littérature canadienne" (*Mém. SRC*, XXIX, mai, 1935, 77-86—an analysis of "An outline of Canadian literature" by LORNE PIERCE, Montreal, 1927). J.-M. RODRIGUE VILLENEUVE, "Pourquoi prendre soin de nos vieux mots" (*CFran.* avril, 697-711).

(b) **Poetry**

HUGOLIN LEMAY, Rév. Père. *Vieux papiers, vieilles chansons.* Montréal, Impr. des Franciscains, 2010 ouest rue Dorchester, 195 pp. 75c. Revd. *NC* oct.

EMILE CHARTIER, "La vie de l'esprit au Canada français. 5e étude: La poésie—L'école patriotique de Québec (1855-1890)" (*Mém. SRC*, XXX, mai, 97-113). "Le dernier Huron, de François-Xavier Garneau" (*BRH* fév., 106-7). ARTHUR LACASSE, "L'Abbé Apollinaire Gingras et son oeuvre" (*Mém. SRC, XXX*, mai, 127-31). "Le poète Charles Berger" (*BRH* déc., 725).

(c) **Fiction**

GRIGNON, CLAUDE-HENRI. *Précisions sur "Un homme et son péché."* Montréal, Edns. du vieux chêne, 865 est rue Sherbrooke, 107 pp. 35c.

MCANDREW, WILLIAM ALLAN GORDON. *Louis Hémon, sa vie et son oeuvre.* Paris, Jouve, 15 rue Racine, 256 pp.

PIERRE DUPUY, "Lettres canadiennes" (*Mercure de France* Jan., 194-6—review article on *Demi-civilisés* and *Sebastien Pierre* by JEAN-CHARLES HARVEY).

(d) **Drama**

P.-G. R[oy], "Le Cirque Royal ou Théâtre Royal" (Royal Circus ou Royal Theatre) (*BRH* nov., 641-66—lists performances given between 1824 and 1844), "L'Hotel Albion, côte du Palais, à Québec" (*BRH* oct., 577-82—lists concerts given in concert-hall between 1832 and 1851), "Le Théâtre Champlain à Près-de-Ville, rue Champlain, à Québec" (*BRH* déc., 705-9—lists performances given in 1852), "Le Théâtre Saint-Louis, à Québec" (*BRH* mars, 174-88). "Le Théâtre Patagon à Québec" (*BRH* mai, 300-3). "Une tragédie de Voltaire à Québec en 1839" [*La mort de César*] (*BRH* oct., 640). "Un vaudeville de l'Honorable F.-G. Marchand" (*BRH* août, 488-9—light comedy presented in 1872 in Quebec).

**D. Selected Publications in Arts and Crafts in Canada**

FALARDEAU, EMILE. *Un maître de la peinture, Antoine-Sébastien Falardeau.* See VII A.

MORISSET, GÉRARD. *Peintres et tableaux.* (Les arts au Canada français, no. 1.) Québec, Edns. du Chevalet, xi, 271 pp.

THÉRÈSE ARCHAMBAULT-LESSARD, "L'artiste lyrique Francis Archambault" (*BRH* fév., 120-2). MARIUS BARBEAU, "Anciens orfèvres de Québec" (*Mém. SRC*, XXIX, mai, 1935, 113-25). O.-A. BÉRIAU, "Le retour à la vie normale par l'artisanat" (*Actualité économique* juin-juillet, 238-53). E.-Z. MASSICOTTE, "Charles-Auguste Fay, facteur d'orgue" [early 18th century] (*BRH* janv., 7-9). GÉRARD MORISSET, "La collection Desjardins au musée de l'Université Laval" (*CFran.* janv., 448-56; oct., 107-18).

## III. POETRY

BRIEN, ROGER. *Faust aux enfers, poèmes.* Montréal, Edns. du Totem, 1935, 169 pp. $1.00. Issued in 1936.

DUGUAY, JEANNE L'ARCHEVÊQUE. *Cantilènes.* Montréal, Beauchemin, 187 pp. $1.00.

DUVAL, CLOVIS. *Les aspects, sonnets.* Préface de JEAN-LOUIS VANEILLE. Saint-Lo, France, Edns. de "Scripta," 24 route de Villedieu, 165 pp. $1.00.

GILLET, JEAN. *Brunes & blondes, poèmes.* Montréal, Beauchemin, 103 pp. $1.00.

GUAY, FRANÇOIS-XAVIER. *Le chemin du bonheur, "la terre."* Montréal, Impr. aux Ateliers des sourds-muets, 7400 blvd. St-Laurent, 122 pp. 50c.

*Notre Saint-Maurice: Draveurs du St. Maurice. Programme de la chanson.* Trois-Rivières, n.p., 16 pp. Four folk-songs by DOLLARD DUBÉ, MOÏSETTE OLIER (Mme. JOS. GARCEAU), ALBERT TESSIER, J. A. THOMPSON.

RÉMI, Rév. Frère. *Cueillette mélodique de l'année.* Québec, n.p., 92 pp. $1.00.

——— *Saint François et Jésus crucifié.* Québec, Impr. missionnaire, 1935, 32 pp.

Poems by the following writers have appeared:

JEAN CHARBONNEAU (*Mém. SRC*, XXX, mai, 1936), ROBERT CHOQUETTE (*New Frontier* May), ALBERT FERLAND (*Le Devoir*, Montréal; *Oiseau bleu* nov.; *Postier Catholique de Paris*, France; *La Presse*, Montréal, 16 sept.; *La Province*, Montréal, 18 juillet; *Relais de Paris*, organ of La Société Littéraire des P.T.T. of France, fév., avril, déc.; *Revue moderne; Mém. SRC*, XXIX, mai, 1935; Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, *Les voix du passé*, programme souvenir, 24 juin; translation in *London Post*, Christmas), VALERE MASSICOTTE (*NC* oct.), LEANDRE POIRIER (*NC* avril), LÉONARD-M. PUECH (*NC* déc.), REGINALD ROY (*NC* déc.).

## IV. FICTION

### A. Novels, *etc.*

ACHARD, EUGÈNE. *L'homme blanc de Gaspé.* Montréal, Librairie générale canadienne, 123 pp. $1.25. For children. Revd. *CFran.* fév., 1937.

*CONSTANTIN-WEYER, MAURICE. *Telle qu'elle était en son vivant.* Paris, Librairie des Champs-Elysées, 254 pp. 12 *frs.*

DAVELUY, MARIE-CLAIRE. *Une révolte au pays des fées.* Dessins de JAMES McISAAC. Montréal, Lévesque, 169 pp. 90c. Revd. *AU* oct.; *RUO* janv.-mars, 1937.

———— *Sur les ailes de l'oiseau bleu: L'envolée féerique.* Dessins de JAMES McISAAC. Montréal, Lévesque, 206 pp. 90c. For children. Revd. *RL* mars.

DESFORÊTS, BENOÎT. *Un sillon dans la forêt.* Montréal, Beauchemin, 203 pp. 75c. Noted in *CFran.* oct.

GARCEAU, Mme CORINNE-P. (BEAUCHEMIN) (MOÏSETTE OLIER, *pseud.*). *Etincelles.* Linogravures de HENRI BEAULAC. Trois-Rivières, Le Nouvelliste, 221 pp. $1.00. Revd. *RL* avril.

———— *Mademoiselle Sérénité.* Trois-Rivières, Le Nouvelliste, 211 pp. 75c.

LALLIER, JOSEPH. *Allie: Récit et impressions.* Montréal, Action paroissiale, 272 pp. 75c. Revd. *RL* mai.

LAVALLÉE, JEANNINE. *Koshawika.* Montréal, Rénovation, 238 rue Larry, 205 pp. $1.50.

*LEFRANC, MARIE. *La randonnée passionnée.* Paris, Ferenczi, 248 pp. 12 *frs.*

OLIER, MOÏSETTE. See GARCEAU, Mme CORINNE-P. (BEAUCHEMIN).

*Sur le chemin* [par] une educatrice canadienne. Montréal, Granger, 109 pp. 35c.

TARDIVEL, JULES-PAUL. *Pour la patrie.* Montréal, Granger, $1.00. Reprint in new setting of *Pour la patrie, roman du xxe siècle*, Montréal, Cadieux, 1895.

*WALD, ANDRÉ. *Voir, roman canadien.* Paris, Eugène Figuière, 166 boul. Montparnasse, 1935, 255 pp. 10 *frs.*

### B. Selected Short Stories

BRASSARD, ADOLPHE. *Confidence de la nature.* (Contes et récits.) Montréal, Lévesque, 91 pp. 40c. For children.

DANTIN, LOUIS. See SEERS, EUGÈNE.

DESROSIERS, LÉO-PAUL. *Le livre des mystères.* Montréal, Le Devoir, 177 pp. $1.00. Noted in *CFran.* oct.

LE MYRE, OSCAR. *Au pays des rêves.* Montréal, Beauchemin, 97 pp. Revd. *RL* avril. For children.

MAXINE. See TASCHEREAU-FORTIER, Mme.

SEERS, EUGÈNE (LOUIS DANTIN, *pseud.*). *Contes de Noël.* (Contes et récits.) Montréal, Lévesque, 117 pp. 40c. For children. Revd. *RUO* avril-juin.

TASCHEREAU-FORTIER, Mme MARIE-CAROLINE-ALEXANDRA (BOUCHETTE) (MAXINE, *pseud.*). *Les trois fées du bois d'épinette: La nature, ses règnes, ses merveilles.* Préface de Monsieur le juge LAETARE ROY. (Contes et récits.) Montréal, Lévesque, 103 pp. 40c. For children.

———— *Le vendeur de paniers.* (Contes et récits.) Montréal, Lévesque, 107 pp. 40c. For children.

## V. DRAMA

CHOQUETTE, ROBERT. *Le curé de village: Scènes de vie canadienne.* Montréal, Granger, 234 pp. $1.00.

CYPRIEN. *L'abonneux: Drame social en trois actes.* Trois-Rivières, Association catholique des Voyageurs de Commerce, 108 pp. 75c. Revd. *RUO* oct.-déc.

DEYGLUN, HENRY. *Coeur de maman: Pièce en cinq actes.* Montréal, Edns. Théâtre populaire français, 46 pp. 25c.

———— *Le roman d'une orpheline: Pièce en 1 prologue et cinq actes.* Montréal, Edns. La Revue Musicale Enr., 8365 boulevard Lajeunesse, 44 pp. 25c.

MORRIER, EMMA. *Quatre essais de théâtre national: Va ton chemin; Bon sang ne ment pas; La trahison; Le rêve du poète.* Edmonton, Impr. "La Survivance," 10010 109e rue, 114 pp.

## VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

### A. Biography and Autobiography, *etc.*

CHOQUETTE, PHILIPPE-AUGUSTE. *Un demi-siècle de vie politique.* Préface de ROBERT RUMILLY. Montréal, Beauchemin, 352 pp. $1.25. Revd. *CFran.* fév., 1937.

CYRILLE, M. *Vers les cimes: Biographie* [du frère Amable]. [Montréal, Impr. de La Salle], 160 pp. 35c.

DAVELUY, MARIE-CLAIRE. *Soeur Mathilde de la Providence, 1854-1936.* (L'oeuvre des tracts, no. 210.) Montréal, Action paroissiale, 16 pp. 10c.

*Les dernières années du bon Père Frédéric.* Saint-Justin, P.Q., "Echo de Saint-Justin," 48 pp.

FALARDEAU, E. *Un maître de la peinture, Antoine-Sébastien Falardeau.* See VII A.

GREIG, MARY STARKEY. *Mère St. Dominique, auxiliatrice du purgatoire, missionnaire en Chine (1842-1927)*, adapté de l'anglais par *MARIE RENÉ-BAZIN. Paris, Spes, 260 pp. 12 *frs.*

LANGEVIN, FRÉDÉRIC. *Mère Marie-Anne, fondatrice de l'Institut des Soeurs de Sainte-Anne, 1809-1890: Esquisse biographique.* Lachine, P.Q., Impr. Sainte-Anne, 1935, 363 pp. Revd. *RD* juin.

*Mère Marie du Sacré-Coeur (1806-1885): Fondatrice du Bon-Pasteur de Québec et ses collaboratrices.* Par une religieuse de la même congrégation. Québec, Asile du Bon-Pasteur, 74 Lachevrotière, 1935, xvi, 276 pp.

MORIN, VICTOR. *Trois docteurs: E.-Z. Massicotte, Litt.D., Aegidius Fauteux, Litt. D., J.-B. Lagacé, Univ. D.* Montréal, Edn. intime, 70 pp. Ltd. ed.

*Un patriote, Armand La Vergne.* (L'oeuvre des tracts, no 190.) Montréal, Action paroissiale, [1935], 16 pp. 10c.

ROBITAILLE, GEORGES. *Montcalm et ses historiens: Etude critique.* Montréal, Granger, 241 pp. $1.00. Revd. *AU* fév., 1937; *CFran.* oct; *RL* mai; *RUO* janv.-mars, 1937; *RTC* sept.

ROY, C.-E. *Thérèse Neumann.* Québec, Action catholique, 366 pp. $1.00. Revd. *Le Séminaire* 15 août.

RUMILLY, ROBERT. *Artisans du miracle canadien: Régime français.* (Figures canadiennes.) Montréal, Lévesque, 272 pp. $1.00. Revd. *RL* avril; *RUO* oct.-déc.

RUMILLY, ROBERT. *Artisans du miracle canadien: Régime anglais.* (Figures canadiennes.) Montréal, Lévesque, 168 pp. 75c. Revd. *RL* mai; *RUO* oct.-déc.

———— *Marguerite Bourgeoys.* Paris, Spes, 245 pp. 12 *frs.* Revd. *Le Séminaire* 25 mars, 1937.

———— *Mercier.* (Collection du Zodiaque, '35.) Montréal, Edns. du Zodiaque (Déom), 545 pp. $1.00. Revd. *CFran.* fév., 1937; *RUO* janv.-mars, 1937.

TESSIER, ALBERT. *Ceux qui firent notre pays.* Montréal, Edns. du Zodiaque (Déom), 207 pp. $1.00. Revd. *AU* nov.; *CFran.* nov; *RUO* avril-juin, 1937.

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(See also VI C and E)

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## VIII. HANDBOOKS AND COMPILATIONS

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# REVIEWS

## ASPECTS OF THE CONSTITUTION

W. P. M. Kennedy

The average layman, however well educated, too often thinks of law as something completely beyond his conception—a vague machine to keep the peace, a necessary arbiter for the litigious, an instrument in the hand of the state, of which he has the most confusing ideas, whether of its origin or its functions. Yet a closer and more realistic view discloses that law is the very foundation of life whether as a society or as a political community; and if it appears to need reform, or to be outmoded, or to be arbitrary, the fault lies with the people from whom law in reality must derive its validity and worth. "The law," as Lord Justice Slesser has recently said, "is of the texture of our well-being." And so obedience is not enough. On all sides the approach to-day to the study of law is human, social, and in terms of life. It is of little value to know the law. The life behind the law is the real problem: how does the law work? why is it the law? does it satisfy human interests? There is a breaking away from the guild idea, the close corporation of black-letter lawyers; and law is becoming a proper study for the unprofessional citizen, who is as capable of taking an intelligent interest in law as in the militia—going to law and going to war, of course, being other questions. In this connection constitutional law is always the most fascinating; for it is the basic rock on which rests the state, which itself constitutes man's answer, down the ages, to the problem of liberty and order, to the issues set between man's co-operative and competitive instincts.

A small library* of books has appeared recently, which ought to appeal to a wider public than that concerned with the technicalities of constitutional law and custom. To Professor Berriedale Keith we owe a new collection of letters to the press, which continues the

*_Letters and Essays on Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-6_, by A. Berriedale Keith, Oxford University Press, 1936.

_The King and the Imperial Crown: The Powers and Duties of His Majesty_, by A. Berriedale Keith, Longmans, Green and Co., 1936.

_Cabinet Government_, by W. Ivor Jennings, Cambridge University Press (Macmillan Co. of Canada), 1936.

_The King and His Dominion Governors_, by the Hon. Mr. Justice A. V. Evatt, Oxford University Press, 1936.

series which appeared in 1935. They are more than worthy of permanence in book-form; for the writer is always able to invest with lively colour current constitutional and international issues when he leaves aside his professional robes. Among authorities well recognized, he walks with almost uncanny skill amid situations—in fact, in law, in convention—where complications abound, where the sign-posts are few, where the air is rarefied, where passions accumulate, where prejudice holds sway—where everything is as confused as these words imply. And yet there emerge a thoroughness of manner and a confidence of statement which are at once surprising and challenging. We cannot always agree; but we are certain that disagreement must be based on a knowledge as wide as the author's. It is impossible to read these letters without feeling that their clarity and logic are something more than those of a skilled advocate. They flow from an amazing knowledge and from a penetrating insight. Beginning with the broadest constitutional issues, such as those connected with South Africa, proceeding to the possibilities inherent in the Statute of Westminster, we are led, through courteous criticism of the position of a governor-general, to a position where constitutional issues cease to bore but lead nearly to madness. Equally interesting are the letters dealing with the Abyssinian problem and the League of Nations. The book closes almost in despair.

Of vaster importance is the treatise on the imperial crown, which ought to command a wide circle of readers, for Professor Keith is mainly concerned in it with a monarch's personal part amid the complexities of modern government. That this part must be that of advice is the opinion of the man in the street—the average citizen; and he is largely right, as emerges clearly from the study. However, the Statute of Westminster has given rise to questions which complicate the simplicity of the opinion. Indeed, the constitutional solutions connected with the abdication of Edward VIII have not in the least helped to clarify the law—there were moments in law when different kings were reigning in the Britannic States—or to bring into relief precedents for future guidance. It is a platitude to say that the crown is the only remaining link of Empire; and it is sometimes a good thing to bury our heads in the sands of platitude until the storm be past. On the other hand, the crown may very well be the *weakest* link in the chain; for the tragic events of last year disclosed that the Britannic States now fall into

four clearly defined classes—a four in one, all equal, each differing fundamentally from the other not merely in function but in actual legal relationship in connection with the legal executive. Some future lawyer of a metaphysical turn of mind, with a knowledge of theology, and not entirely ignorant of theatrical technique, may perhaps decide all this subtle puzzle, when the "common allegiance" may vary from that to one king to that to another at the same time, without destroying the unity of the concept. It speaks sadly for these degenerate days that we do not produce a political Athanasius to write creeds of Empire suitable for recitation in schools.

At one point we find a place where we shall disagree with Professor Keith, *ruat cœlum*. While he believes that royal *power* has decreased to the advantage of royal *influence*, and while we acknowledge that the activities of Victoria would never be tolerated to-day even in the most loyal circles, yet we cannot subscribe to Professor Keith's conception of the position of the monarch to-day in foreign affairs. Doubtless Prince Albert had a good intelligence, certainly as good as that of Lord John Russell, but Victoria was simply an active member of the tribe of Benjamin—and this is said without any European significance. I do not, however, believe that a monarch has any place in offering advice or in insisting on its acceptance in foreign affairs, or in suggesting to a ministry that the electorate ought to be consulted. The distinguished author thinks that it would be extremely difficult for a cabinet to refuse such a request. It is far more difficult to believe that any king would make it. Foreign policy to-day is the problem of arriving at some working balance between the projections of the domestic policy of the four distinct and separate groups of Britannic States. Without wilfully setting any limits on the processes of evolution in relation to the royal insight, we refuse to believe that within anything like reasonable time, they will so develop as to endow them with claims to make such suggestions as would threaten the life of a cabinet. Even young Mr. Eden—with aeroplanes, radio, telegrams, and telephones, combined with a not self-evident lack of assurance—cannot walk with too great care in these tremendous neighbourhoods. Where he falters, kings must not rush in. They are to be seen, not heard: symbols of value and worth, but not cymbals. However all this may be, there is much stimulating writing here. For ourselves, crown law is becoming archaeological;

while for some people it remains mystical—the *O altitudo* of Sir Thomas Browne. We are quite content that the crown should constitute the legal executive; that we should preserve our traditions, provided that in each jurisdiction the will of the people prevails. The rest is vanity. Professor Keith is outspoken and critical; but no divinity hedges a parliamentary throne. Dignity in expression, courtesy in statement, the amenities of debate—let the crown be "one" or "divisible," "imperial" or "national"—and, in our view, we can exercise those critical functions of intelligence with which nature has endowed us. In the issues, as the innkeeper said in *Silas Marner*, we may both be right.

Perhaps much of all this is itself vanity and vexation of spirit; for does not every school-boy know the functions of cabinet government as well as his father knew who strangled Atahualpa and who won the battle of Buxar? This precocious youth may learn many errors of his ways when he reads Dr. Jennings's book, of which we may say at once that it is great, comprehensive, and eminently readable. It stands to-day without any serious rival as a well-documented survey of the operation of the cabinet system in the United Kingdom. It views each department synthetically and analytically—the Treasury in a manner brilliant. It sees the living machine. Here lies its danger of mortality; but we believe that it will put on immortality and that it will be as lasting as Bagehot. It shares, with Bagehot, personal views. It is coloured, as is Bagehot, with the author's political opinions. It is full, as is Bagehot, of concise and aphoristic judgments. But these are the qualities which humanize the research and at least attempt to see the life behind the law and the custom.

On the other hand, the volume does not satisfy us in relation to the functions of the crown where a dissolution of parliament, or a demand for the resignation of a ministry is concerned. If ministerial responsibility is the main theme, there are heard, however, notes which appear to destroy the harmony of the doctrine. Indeed, so varied are these notes that we pass, willingly or unwillingly, it does not matter, from dogma and credal security to the varieties of protestantism. Are there reserve powers residing in the crown? What discretionary authority, if any, remains with a monarch? Can he ever refuse assent to policies? These questions are not clearly and finally answered; and they are important questions. Are there answers to them?

They appear in another setting, and one of some moment

perhaps to Canadians. The Imperial Conference of 1926 laid it down that in all essential respects the relations of a governor-general to his ministers are those of the king to his ministers. This might well be the text for Mr. Justice Evatt's book, which admits him to that distinguished company of Australian jurists and lawyers which should be our envy as it is Australia's pride. First of all, it is a sociological monstrosity to suggest that the executive principle in one country can be imitated effectively in another. Whatever "equality of status" may mean, and even allowing for "difference in function," it cannot mean "imitation." Each state must work out its own executive conventions; otherwise we may suffer that bandying about of "authorities" which characterized the Byng episode of 1926. Granting, however, the validity of the 1926 agreement, we are no further advanced, for there do not seem to be any clear-cut rules in the United Kingdom, which could be called "essential." Mr. Justice Evatt sees clearly the difficulties which surround a governor-general, and he suggests that his relationship to his ministers should be made definite. At the moment we believe that the proposals will not be welcomed; but time is on his side. It is clear that vagueness may become dangerous, and we ought not to avoid facing problems merely in order to preserve some fatuous concept of constitutional elasticity.

At any rate, the most vital thing in constitutional law is always the problem of the executive. It is not unworthy, then, for a British state, as we recall the events of the Canadian rebellions a hundred years ago, to keep a watchful eye on this aspect of law, which, behind the facade of parliamentary machinery, may become detrimental. Our fathers, in the Canadas, were not unwilling to risk their lives that government by a responsible executive should prevail. Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay, if the prerogatives of the crown are to remain the privileges of the people; if responsibility is to be to a free legislature and not to a political caucus; if "executive" is not to become "bureaucracy." Whether the functions of the monarchy be carried out by the monarch himself or by his viceroy, it is as true to-day as it was in 1777, when Burke wrote his *Address to the King*, that the "throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission and passive obedience; on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed; on acts in defiance of their prejudices and habit." The letter of the law must always be superseded in favour of the substance of liberty.

# MYTHOLOGY IN THE ROMANTICS*

GILBERT NORWOOD

Baedeker is never funny (except indeed when he talks of "pleasing *putti*") but you can rely upon him for the number of yds. lying between Rly. Stn. (rfmts) and *Museum of Plastic Art: only the peevish would expect that iron record to be garlanded with anecdotes about two darkies. The delightful merit of Professor Bush's book is that it not only reveals all Baedeker's bland yet ruthless omniscience, but vibrates also with charm, wit, an unfailing sense of humour and of proportion. His reading is stupendous, almost dreadful, for in addition to all the writers whom charity would call poets, he has studied even the reviews of them: the *T.L.S.* is his washpot, over *Monatschriften* doth he cast out his shoe. I feel like the Queen of Sheba when I learn (p. 306) that he has several times read *The Life and Death of Jason* at one sitting. An immensely useful book, you would say, but its author has been buried by the silt of his own Pactolus? Look at this: "As evidence of scholarly conscientiousness I may say that I once read in all the translations of Ovid made during the period 1550-1800 which are in the British Museum, and even wrote extensive comparative notes on them. My regret for these youthful wild oats is greater than I can express, and the only proof I can give of increased discretion is the resolve to keep my knowledge to myself" (p. 32).

No less striking is the skill that manipulates this huge heap of material. Here we have a multitude of poets practically all writing about Prometheus (bound or unbound), yet throughout we know where we are, conscious of affiliations and influences, original treatment and hackwork, taught with patient clear-sighted learning not only who wrote what, but why he or she wrote so, with a constant vivifying reference to the whole background of national culture. It is an austere, strong pleasure to observe how poems vary in potency according as myth is for the poets a means to voice the spiritual values of contemporary life, or to escape from a sordid present, or only to provide an elegance of manner. "For one main thesis of this book . . . is that mythological poetry is alive when myths are recreated, when they carry modern implica-

*_Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry_, by Douglas Bush, Harvard University Press, 1937.

tions, and that mythological poetry in which myths are merely retold is, if not dead, at least of a very inferior order" (p. 244). But a few definite instances will better show the critical temper of this book:

> The difference between the Miltonic original and the echo [in Gray] is the difference between convention informed by poetic feeling and convention as a substitute for poetic feeling (p. 33).
>
> The unblinking objectivity of Ovid (p. 103).
>
> While his [Morris's] psychologizing of Helen, Paris, and the rest is in the medieval tradition, the feelings delineated are almost entirely modern (p. 300).
>
> Browning was not a mystic, he was only misty; in the spiritual and ethical world he was somewhat like Heracles, a well-meaning, confused, energetic irresponsible tramp (p. 380).
>
> [*Apropos* of Pater's "hard gem-like flame" and the rest of that famous *Conclusion*] Keats's mature conception of beauty meant the unifying of experience, not the multiplication of experiences (p. 397).
>
> Wilde praises "the wondrous boy" who heard
> The horn of Atalanta faintly blown
> Across the Cumnor hills,
>
> and we must grant that not everyone could, in ten words, recall Swinburne, Tennyson, and Arnold (p. 420).
>
> What is one to say of a kind of beauty which vanishes the moment one's eye leaves the page? (p. 501).

Downright errors I have scarcely ever detected, but I hope Mr. Bush, who writes "disillusion" nine times and "disillusionment" twice, will make up his mind (and choose the latter). On page 256 "Chiron" should be "Asclepius," and on page 407 "uncut" should be "unopened:" "uncut" means that the edges have not been cut down for re-binding. Something has happened to Crowley's dates (p. 462), for he can hardly have left several volumes of poetry, even in our epoch, if he died at the age of seven.

There must, however, in so vast a discussion, be matters of opinion about which disagreement will arise. That Keats was "a born poet" (p. 129) is a widely held view, but I cannot imagine how it survives perusal of the trash wherein his earliest verse is so rich. My own favourite runs:

> We next could tell
> Of those who in the cause of freedom fell;
> Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell;
> Of him whose name to every heart's a solace,
> High-minded and unbending William Wallace.
> While to the rugged north our musing turns,
> We well might drop a tear for him and Burns.

The miraculous, and miraculously rapid, improvement in Keats belongs to the curiosities of literature.

Let us grant that Arnold is often prim, guarded, literary-donnish in fact.

> As a cunning workman, in Pekin,
> Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
> An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
> And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
> Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands.

I select that as the most academic among the numberless splendid passages in Arnold—it does read like a marvellous professor trying to be Homeric. But, even as a mere exercise, is it not beautiful? And elsewhere! It is high time we did justice to Arnold's magnificent pictures. Most of us are so engrossed by his touching and lovely and fortifying elegiac mood that we forget those descriptions, unsurpassed in their kind, that fill *The Strayed Reveller*. Even that superb simile in *The Scholar Gipsy* fills too many critics with sudden anguish about irrelevance—the same critics who prostrate themselves with moans of unanimous rapture before the incoherent word-froth of *Kubla Khan*. When, by the way, Mr. Bush rightly asserts (p. 260) "that *Merope* is the most complete reproduction in English of the form and conventions of Sophoclean tragedy," it is important to add that this play provides the best (perhaps the only) English example of the Euripidean treatment of myth: it is exactly like Euripides (not Sophocles) to perceive and display the tyrant's share of virtue.

Swinburne's faults are obvious, not ill described by himself as making his work

> A maze of monotonous murmur,
> Where reason roves ruined by rhyme.

But we should at least feel grateful for that delicious word-music at which during at least a generation almost everyone has sneered. It would be remarkable in Italian: in English it is a miracle. That enchanting little poem, *A Match* ("If you were April's lady") contains, to be sure, nothing but the chime of exquisitely modulated fairy bells; but what more do you find in Virgil's *Eclogues* and some of Shakespeare's most admired songs? For Stephen Phillips, though inferior to Swinburne, a similar defence can be put forward. His writing is rhetoric, no doubt, but we have no distaste for rhetoric—we extol it to the skies—when our theme is the *Essay on Man* or Gray's *Elegy*, magnificent poems that have practically no virtue except as delightful utterance. For my part I cannot applaud those who are seized with a vertigo of admiration before

Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* after pishing and tushing at Phillips's *Ulysses* and *Marpessa*. "But they are so derivative!" Here we light upon a fault (from which Mr. Bush is largely free)—the common and deadly error of confusing credit due to a work of art with credit due to the artist. It is, of course, most frequent in the study of painting. Who doubts that if someone approached the curator of any art-gallery on earth with plain evidence that his cherished *Moses before Pharoah* was painted not by Raphael (let us say) but by "a pupil," that curator would fall swooning across his catalogues? The world admires not the work, but the label. And if some officious fellow discovers that Keats's *Ode to Autumn* is translated from Siamese, ninety-nine critics out of a hundred will instantly think less of the Ode, though it remains exactly what it was before the discovery.

The strictures rightly directed here upon Poe, especially the lines *To Helen* ("the glory that was Greece") should have been accompanied by a reminder that, as Poe says, *To Helen* is "a crude composition of my earliest boyhood." But a footnote put me upon a gem for which I thank Mr. Bush fervently—a rendering by Mr. Aldous Huxley of Milton's "Not that fair field of Enna" into the manner of *Ulalume:*

> It was noon in the fair field of Enna,
> When Proserpina gathering flowers—
> Herself the most fragrant of flowers,
> Was gathered away to Gehenna
> By the Prince of Plutonian powers;
> Was borne down the windings of Brenner
> To the gloom of his amorous bowers—
> Down the tortuous highway of Brenner
> To the god's agapemonous bowers.

It is sad to find Mr. Bush adding the weight of his authority to the present cult of Mr. T. S. Eliot, whose work and its vogue seem to inaugurate that universal darkness wherewith the *Dunciad* closes. Mr. Bush has put the case against such poetry with admirable point, though too briefly (pp. 534-5): "Partly because of the complexities and subtleties of the modern mind (the modern euphemism for intellectual confusion), a number of recent poets have taken to private codes. This is an obvious sign of unhealthy inbreeding; poets cannot hope to lead mankind by taking in one another's washing." How then can he describe *The Waste Land* as "probably the major poetical work of our time"? Every poet

in the world till our own era has been reasonably intelligible to educated contemporaries. The principles that sufficed Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe should be good enough for us; and the suspicion cannot be quelled that Mallarmé, Mr. Eliot, and the other queerly masked members of this poetical Ku Klux Klan are simply afraid to risk comparison with their predecessors. Poor Watson, because he is now Horatian, now Tennysonesque, is thrust into a corner, though many a six-line passage of his outweighs *The Waste Land* in poetical charm. Yes, charm! There is far too much obscurantism about, far too much mumbo-jumbo in criticism. Poetry should give us pleasure, just as a cigar or a sunset gives pleasure. It may and usually does give us more, often immensely more; but the instant pleasure is a vital element in all good poetry. If you are untouched by *Samson Agonistes* and turn rather to Herrick, no bones are broken; not everyone likes cigars. But *The Waste Land* is a pipe that won't draw.

My objections, you will have noted, are few. The book is magnificent—full, buoyant, clear, delightful in its details, masterly in its structure. To do it justice by quotation is impossible, but I cannot omit one priceless summary: "The romantic movement involved . . . a change from a mechanical conception of the world to an enthusiastic religion of nature, from rational virtue to emotional sensibility . . . from acceptance of things as they are to faith in progress, from contentment with urban civilization to sentimental primitivism, from traditional doctrines of literary imitation to conceptions of the naïve and original, from poetic preoccupation with the normal, the true and the actual to dreams of the strange, the beautiful and the ideal" (p. 43). This volume is a notable chapter in the history of culture and art, showing incidentally (but thus all the more impressively) how English and American poetry have steadily declined with the decline of classical scholarship, not as an academic pursuit but as a living element in national culture.

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## LLOYD GEORGE AND THE GENERALS*

FRANK H. UNDERHILL

Mr. Lloyd George has now devoted six volumes, containing almost thirty-six hundred pages, to his war memoirs. As he

**War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, V, VI, Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936.

reminds the reader in the preface to his final volume, he was the only minister in any of the belligerent countries who held official position throughout the War from August 1, 1914, to November 11, 1918. During the last two years of the War he had the main responsibility in directing the forces of the whole British Empire. These facts alone would make his memoirs important and notable. In addition, they are written with the liveliness and vigour which Mr. Lloyd George brings to everything that he undertakes, and they are based upon an extensive use of unpublished documents—memoranda, reports, letters, minutes of the War Cabinet, *etc.*—which enable him to tell his story with an authority possessed by hardly any other man who has written about those years. The war memoirs come to an end with the Armistice. Mr. Lloyd George holds out some hope that he may try to continue them in further volumes about the peace-making. Both those readers who like spirited writing and those who want more light on why the peace treaties were what they were, will wish him continued strength and health for this task.

In his third and fourth volumes, dealing with the first year of his prime ministership, Mr. Lloyd George explained the reorganization of the nation at war which he carried through, and the increase both in striking power and in staying power which resulted from it. Now, in the fifth and sixth volumes, he is mainly concerned with the military events of 1918, from the disasters on the Western Front in the spring to the final victory in November. He is especially anxious to make two points: first, that the British defeats in March and April were due not to the failure of the government to supply sufficient man-power to Sir Douglas Haig, but to the faulty disposition of their forces made by the British G.H.Q. and to the lack of a unified plan of defence between the British and French commanders; and, second, that final victory was due to the unified command of which he, Mr. Lloyd George, was the chief exponent, and which he was able to impose upon Haig and Pétain only after Ludendorff's smashing successes. No doubt he selects documents to strengthen his case, but on the whole he seems to prove it effectively.

His indictment of the generals, and especially of Haig, is damning. Haig, in spite of the terrible losses at Passchendaele and of the collapse on the Russian and Italian fronts, wanted to continue the British attack in Flanders at the opening of the 1918 campaign, and concentrated his troops in the north, leaving the Fifth Army front

very weak to meet the German attack which everyone knew was coming. He and Pétain jointly frustrated the plan of a general reserve under Foch which both governments and army commanders had agreed upon before the season opened. When at last the tide turned, neither the War Office nor G.H.Q. in France appreciated the extent to which German power had disintegrated. Their gaze was concentrated upon the Western Front and they failed to understand the effect of the rolling-up of Turkey and the abandonment of the fight by Austria and Bulgaria. Mr. Lloyd George again and again repeats his belief that, if the Allies had used some of the troops which were slaughtered in frontal attacks on the Somme and in Flanders during 1916 and 1917 to strike at the flank of the enemy in Palestine and the Balkans, the War might have been ended much sooner than it was. Again and again he recalls that the new techniques of this war—tanks, machine guns, aeroplanes, transport organization behind the lines—were forced by politicians upon reluctant generals who had no imaginative conception of the meaning of mechanization at all. "In the South African war a fox-hunter was more useful than a machine-gunner." Again and again he shows how either sheer stupid lack of imagination or the selfish desire to win glory on his own part of the front prevented each of the allied commanders in turn from co-operating in plans that were based upon a comprehensive survey of the whole situation.

In all this it seems to me that Mr. Lloyd George has pretty well justified the claim of his admirers that he was the Pitt of the last war who saved England when no one else could save her. His tremendous driving power, his capacity for rising to a crisis, his sound strategic judgment, will stand out more and more clearly as the years go by. But there are certain other considerations arising out of these volumes which need further discussion.

One of the remarkable features of Mr. Lloyd George's narrative is his neglect of the British Dominions. He has nothing but praise for them, for their statesmen and their military leaders. But his paragraphs on these topics are commonplace and conventional. He is obviously not interested. He tells us practically nothing about the part played by the Dominion prime ministers in the Imperial War Cabinet, or the attitude they took on the innumerable controversies in which he was engaged with army chiefs and with allied and associated governments. Yet all these matters must have been discussed in the presence of the representatives of the Dominions. Did they make any contribution to the discussions?

Were they merely "yes-men"? Is Mr. Lloyd George, who never shows any particular solicitude for sparing the feelings of Frenchmen and Americans and other Englishmen, still bound by some unusual reticence when he deals with the Dominions? Or were all the achievements in the direction of Dominion status, about which we have read so much from our own Dominion leaders, accomplished in the midst of another of those famous fits of British imperial absence of mind?

Mr. Lloyd George's attitude towards the United States is also provocative of questions. There is an undertone of criticism running through all his references to the Americans, and sometimes the criticism is frank and unrestrained. He is at great pains to justify the British and French proposals for distributing the American troops among the allied formations instead of giving them an independent position of their own. He is inclined to put down the failure of the United States to get her forces more quickly to the front and to provide guns and aeroplanes for them, to President Wilson's incapacity as a war leader. "He had a stubborn mind and walked reluctantly along paths he disliked, however necessary he had discovered it to be that he should tread them." He is sarcastic about "the sacred text" of the Fourteen Points. One can predict with some confidence what he will have to say about the American rôle in the peace-making at Paris.

This tendency towards an anti-American and anti-Wilson bias increases the reader's doubts about one side of the story of the War with which Mr. Lloyd George has dealt very inadequately. He never really answers what was the fundamental liberal criticism of his leadership during all the period from the ousting of Asquith to his own final downfall after Chanak. He makes out a good case for his thesis that the War could not be ended until Germany had been clearly beaten and forced to recognize her defeat. But he does not answer the charge that, in keeping his people keyed up to the point at which they would carry on the War long after the first flush of enthusiasm was over, he deliberately stirred up the basest of popular passions, thereby making a liberal peace impossible and betraying the liberal faith with which the country had entered into the struggle. One feels that he will have a much more difficult task before him in writing his apologia for the Peace Conference than he has had in demonstrating that he was one of Britain's greatest war leaders.